



Neighbourhood Planning Sustainability Check



This guidance presents a template for preparing a Sustainability Check Report for your Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

This Sustainability Check reflects the intentions of a more formal Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and aims to predict and assess the **social, environmental** and **economic** effects that are likely to arise from the adoption of your NDP, in order to ensure that the strategies and policies within this contribute to and promote sustainable development¹.

A full SA is not a requirement of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. However, application of a 'lighter touch' Sustainability Check is considered to be good practice as it provides a useful means to assess your plan proposals against a set of sustainability objectives - the intention being to help avoid negative environmental and socio-economic effects and to identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of your parish and the prosperity and quality of life of its residents.

It is worth mentioning at this point that the Sustainability Check or SA should not be confused with a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA is a separate assessment to the SA/Sustainability Check and focuses in more detail on the environmental impact of more strategic level plan proposals.

For consistency, the Sustainability Check of the NDP reflects the 'SA Framework' which was used for the SA process on the Local Plan. The SA Framework is a framework of 19 SA themes together with a number of objectives, appraisal questions and indicators, which provided a methodological framework for the SA on the Local Plan.

As the template report (on the following pages) sets out the process that you will have followed, the actual guidance accompanying this template is minimal.

Please read through the Sustainability Check Report template and if there are any areas where further clarification is required please contact the planning officer who is helping to support your NDP process.

¹ Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

St Just Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan: Sustainability Check

Introduction

This paper presents a Sustainability Check of **St Just's Draft** Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

This Sustainability Check reflects the intentions of a more formal Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and aims to predict and assess the **social, environmental** and **economic** effects that are likely to arise from the adoption of **St Just** NDP, in order to ensure that the strategies and policies within this contribute to and promote sustainable development.

St Just NDP Steering Group considered carrying out a full SA (which is not a requirement of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012), but it was decided that applying a 'lighter touch' Sustainability Check would be less resource intensive, whilst achieving suitable outcomes to inform the NDP making process. It was considered to be good practice to carry out a Sustainability Check as it provides a useful means to assess plan proposals against a set of sustainability objectives - the intention being to help avoid negative environmental and socio-economic effects and to identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of **St Just area** and the prosperity and quality of life of residents through the NDP.

This report sets out how the Sustainability Check was applied to **St Just Draft** NDP and the results of this.

NB. The Sustainability Check or SA should not be confused with a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA is a separate assessment and focuses in more detail on the environmental impact of plan proposals².

St Just Parish NDP: The Sustainability Check process

When adopted, **St Just** NDP will sit within a framework of higher level planning documents, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Cornwall's Local Plan. The Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies 2010-2030 (Local Plan) was adopted in November 2016 and was subject to a SA (further details available at www.cornwall.gov.uk).

For consistency, the Sustainability Check of the **St Just Draft** NDP reflects the 'SA Framework' which was used for the SA process on the Local Plan. The SA Framework is a framework of 19 SA themes together with a number of objectives, appraisal questions and indicators, which provided a framework for the SA of the Local Plan.

2. It was thought that Policy RE3 regarding onshore wind may require an SEA, and this is currently being rewritten.

Table 1: Sustainability Check - Themes and Objectives

Theme	Sustainability Objectives
Climatic Factors	To reduce our contribution to climate change through a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
	To increase resilience to climate change, and reduce vulnerability.
Waste	To minimise the generation of waste and encourage greater reuse and recycling of materials in accordance with the waste hierarchy.
Minerals and Geodiversity	To minimise the consumption of mineral resources and ensure the sustainable management of these resources
	To conserve, enhance and restore the condition of geodiversity in the county.
Soil	To minimise the use of undeveloped land and protect and enhance soil quality.
	To encourage and safeguard local food production.
Air	To reduce air pollution and ensure air quality continues to improve.
Water	To reduce the risk of flooding and vulnerability to flooding, sea level rise and coastal erosion.
	To maintain and enhance water quality and reduce consumption and increase efficiency of water use.
Biodiversity	To conserve, enhance and restore the condition and extent of biodiversity in the county and allow its adaptation to climate change.
Landscape	To protect and enhance the quality of the natural, historic and cultural landscape and seascape.
Maritime	To encourage clean, healthy, productive and diverse waters; To protect coastal areas and ensure sustainable maritime environments.
Historic Environment	To protect and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment.
Design	To promote and achieve high quality, locally distinctive design, sustainable land use and sustainable built development.
Social Inclusion	To reduce poverty and social exclusion and provide opportunities for all to participate fully in society.
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	To reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.
Housing	To meet the needs of the local community as a whole in terms of general market, affordable, adaptable and decent housing.
Health, Sport and Recreation	To improve health through the promotion of healthier lifestyles and improving access to open space and health, recreation and sports facilities.
Economic Development	To support a balanced and low carbon economy that meets the needs of the area and promotes a diverse range of quality employment opportunities.
Education and Skills	To maximise accessibility for all to the necessary education, skills and knowledge to play a full role in society.
Transport and Accessibility	To improve access to key services and facilities by reducing the need to travel and by providing safe sustainable travel choices.
	To reduce traffic congestion and minimise transport related greenhouse gas emissions.
Energy	To encourage the use of renewable energy, increase energy efficiency and security and reduce fuel poverty.

KEY	
	Environmental Themes
	Social Themes
	Economic Themes

For the purpose of carrying out the Sustainability Check on **St Just Draft** NDP, it was considered unnecessary to apply the full SA Framework, as this would have entailed a very lengthy and detailed analysis. Instead, the 19 SA Framework themes and objectives (hereafter referred to as the Sustainability themes and objectives) have been considered directly against **St Just Draft** NDP (i.e. without presenting answers to each of the individual appraisal questions which are included within the more detailed SA Framework). The Sustainability themes and objectives are set out in Table 1.

The **St Just** Parish NDP Steering Group have carried out the Sustainability Check, by considering Sustainability themes and objectives (see Table 1) against the overall **St Just Draft** NDP and including consideration of all of the following elements of this:

- The Vision for **St Just**
- The NDP Objectives for **St Just**; and,
- Each of the **[insert number]** NDP Policies.

The **St Just Draft** NDP was considered as to whether it is likely to undermine, support, or neither undermine or support, the Sustainability themes or, whether the theme is irrelevant to the NDP or the anticipated outcome is unknown at this stage.

Consideration of how the **St Just Draft** NDP performed against the Sustainability themes and objectives was carried out by the Climate Action Group of St Just Town Council, both individually and in consultation, with the assistance of the NDP Steering Group.

The outputs of this process are:

1. The Sustainability Check assessment table of **St Just** Draft NDP (see Appendix **[1/2]**); and
2. Sustainability Check results summary table of **St Just** Draft NDP (see Appendix **[2/3]**).

Sustainability Check Results

The results of the Sustainability Check are presented in Appendices **[1/2]** and **[2/3]**.

St Just parish is wholly contained within both the World Heritage Site and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and as such any development within the parish is already subject to a great number of constraints.

The Draft NDP lays great stress on keeping the boundaries of the present settlements, which were found by the survey to be very important to the people of St Just. As such, the only development outside these boundaries is likely to be in (rare) rural exception sites. In the last ten years, only one development of more than 20 houses has taken place, and development has been confined to small infill sites and restoration of derelict properties or conversion of farm buildings. It is therefore very unlikely that any large development will take place, and the NDP attempts to ensure that any development will take place in the most sustainable fashion possible.

Conclusion

The Sustainability Check on **St Just's Draft** NDP has demonstrated that the policies within this and the vision and objectives that it seeks to achieve succeed in encouraging sustainable development.

Appendix 1: Questions used to help carry out the Sustainability Check

Theme	Sustainability Objectives	Decision making questions
Climatic Factors	To reduce our contribution to climate change through a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it limit greenhouse gas emissions? • Does it secure the highest viable resource and energy efficiency? • Does it encourage the use of renewable energy technologies?
	To increase resilience to climate change, and reduce vulnerability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it minimise vulnerability and encourage resilience to the effects of climate change?
Waste	To minimise the generation of waste and encourage greater reuse and recycling of materials in accordance with the waste hierarchy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce the amount of waste produced, collected, and or landfilled? • Will it increase the amount of waste recycled or recovered? • Will it increase levels of composting or anaerobic digestion? • Has space for storage of recycled materials been planned for? • Will it reduce the waste management industry's contribution to climate change?
Minerals and Geodiversity	To minimise the consumption of mineral resources and ensure the sustainable management of these resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it minimise the consumption of primary mineral resources and encourage re-use of secondary resources? • Will it ensure development does not irreversibly sterilise important mineral resources?
	To conserve, enhance and restore the condition of geodiversity in the county.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it prevent harm to and, where appropriate, enhance geological conservation interests in the county? • Will mineral working impact on designated land?
Soil	To minimise the use of undeveloped land and protect and enhance soil quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it protect, enhance and improve soil quality in Cornwall?
	To encourage and safeguard local food production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it avoid development that leads to the loss of productive soils?
Air	To reduce air pollution and ensure air quality continues to improve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce pollution including greenhouse gas emissions? • Will it maintain or improve air quality in Cornwall?
Water	To reduce the risk of flooding and vulnerability to flooding, sea level rise and coastal erosion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal reduce, or avoid increasing the risk of flooding overall?

Theme	Sustainability Objectives	Decision making questions
	To maintain and enhance water quality and reduce consumption and increase efficiency of water use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal maintain or enhance water quality overall? • Does the proposal reduce the overall demand for water? • Will the proposal provide for greater integrated water catchment management and strengthen links between habitats to increase the likelihood of adaptation to climate change? • Will the proposal increase the risk of water pollution events?
Biodiversity	To conserve, enhance and restore the condition and extent of biodiversity in the county and allow its adaptation to climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal protect, enhance or restore biodiversity interests of BAP habitats, Cornwall Wildlife Sites, SSSIs and internationally, nationally and regionally designated areas? • Does the proposal allow adaptation to climate change through the connection of habitats (wildlife corridors)? • Does it protect not only designated areas but also of wildlife interest everywhere? • Will it encourage the provision of new or improved wildlife habitats?
Landscape	To protect and enhance the quality of the natural, historic and cultural landscape and seascape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it sustain and enhance and/or restore the distinctive qualities and features of the natural, historic and cultural landscape and seascape character? • Will it conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cornwall AONB and the Tamar Valley AONB, and increase understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONBs? • Will it protect, enhance and promote opportunities for green infrastructure within and between urban settlements? • Will it maintain and enhance a high quality living environment? • Will it encourage the location and design of development to respect and improve landscape character and the landscape setting of settlements?
Maritime	To encourage clean, healthy, productive and diverse waters; To protect coastal areas and ensure sustainable maritime environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the proposal protect, enhance or restore maritime heritage, habitat and biodiversity, both designated and undesignated? • Will the proposal incorporate adaptation to climate change and its likely effects on the sea, coast and estuaries? • Will the proposal operate within the carrying capacity of the receiving environment, without adverse effect on its sustainability? • Will the proposal operate within safe biological, chemical and physical limits?

Theme	Sustainability Objectives	Decision making questions
Historic Environment	To protect and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal reinforce the distinctive character of Cornwall? • Does the proposal have an acceptable/unacceptable level of impact on the historic environment? • Does the proposal preserve and enhance the cultural and social significance of the historic asset? • Will it result in development which is sympathetic towards the need to promote the Cornwall's unique heritage value, historic environment and culture? • Have flood mitigation measures been designed to be compatible with the immediate historic environment? • Has a balance been struck between the level of risk (e.g. in adaptation to climate change or flood risk) and the aspiration to preserve the distinctive qualities of the historic environment?
Design	To promote and achieve high quality, locally distinctive design, sustainable land use and sustainable built development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it encourage developers to build to higher environmental standards? • Will it help to promote local distinctiveness? • Does the proposal meet targets for renewable energy capture and sustainable construction using BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) and/or CEEQUAL (Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment and Award Scheme)? • Will it promote high quality, sustainable and sympathetic design that takes account of sustainable construction and transport modes, and green infrastructure?
Social Inclusion	To reduce poverty and social exclusion and provide opportunities for all to participate fully in society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve access to and provision of services, health and community facilities (including community youth facilities) especially in rural areas and for the socially excluded? • Will it reduce poverty, deprivation, discrimination, social exclusion and inequalities?
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	To reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce crime and anti-social activity, and in turn, provide safer communities in Cornwall (particularly in the most deprived neighbourhoods and identified hot spots). • Will it help reduce the fear of crime?

Theme	Sustainability Objectives	Decision making questions
Housing	To meet the needs of the local community as a whole in terms of general market, affordable, adaptable and decent housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it provide an appropriate mix of housing to ensure delivery of long-term regeneration schemes for the county? • Will it reduce the number of people homeless or in temporary accommodation? • Will it contribute towards the provision of affordable, social and key worker housing? • Will it reduce the number of unfit homes, and those falling below the decent homes standards? • Will it deliver adaptable housing to meet the lifelong needs of the population? • Will it provide a well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes? • Is it flexible in planning for increased demand over the plan period? • Will it provide energy efficient development which reduces the annual cost of heating/lighting and helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions? • Will it make the best use of land?
Health, Sport and Recreation	To improve health through the promotion of healthier lifestyles and improving access to open space and health, recreation and sports facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve health and well-being and reduce inequalities in health? • Will it improve access to health services? • Will it improve access to the countryside, coast, recreation and open spaces? • Will it increase participation and engagement in physical activity and sport? • Will it lead to unacceptable noise levels?
Economic Development	To support a balanced and low carbon economy that meets the needs of the area and promotes a diverse range of quality employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it promote a diverse range of employment opportunities? • Will it provide affordable, small scale, managed workspace to support local need? • Will it support the development of access to ICT facilities including Broadband, particularly in rural areas? • Will it raise the quality of employment and reduce seasonality?
Education and Skills	To maximise accessibility for all to the necessary education, skills and knowledge to play a full role in society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it help improve the qualifications and skills of young people? • Will it improve facilities and opportunities for lifelong learning (particularly for those with greatest need)? • Will it help increase the County's skilled and professional workforce? • Will it support a viable future for rural communities? • Will it encourage a greater diversity of choice in skills training as part of regeneration efforts? • Will it increase accessibility to training facilities?

Theme	Sustainability Objectives	Decision making questions
Transport and Accessibility	<p>To improve access to key services and facilities by reducing the need to travel and by providing safe sustainable travel choices.</p> <p>To reduce traffic congestion and minimise transport related greenhouse gas emissions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it promote sustainable forms of transport (public transport including bus and rail, cycle and pedestrian routes) and ensure the necessary associated infrastructure is made available? • Will it reduce traffic congestion by promoting alternative modes of transport? • Will it reduce the need to travel by seeking to balance homes, jobs, services and facilities? • Will it lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions? • Will it improve service provision or provide a service or facility which is accessible to all, including those with disabilities and those in the more rural areas? • Will it transfer freight from road to rail and/or sea?
Energy	<p>To encourage the use of renewable energy, increase energy efficiency and security and reduce fuel poverty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it promote and support the use of renewable and low carbon energy technologies? • Will it help reduce fuel poverty? • Will it encourage local energy production?

Appendix [1/2]: The Sustainability Check Results

Key:

-	Likely to undermine the Sustainability Objective
+/-	Likely to neither undermine or contribute to meeting the Sustainability Objective
+	Likely to support the Sustainability Objective
0	Impacts unknown or Sustainability objective irrelevant to this element of the NDP

Sustainability Check of the St Just NDP			
Theme	Sustainability Objective	Comment	Likely Impact
Climatic Factors	To reduce our contribution to climate change through a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.	Policies RE1, 2 and 3 will encourage the use of individual and community renewable energy, both solar and wind.	
	To increase resilience to climate change, and reduce vulnerability.	Policies BD2 and 3 will encourage developments using renewable energy, and incorporating solar energy and passive solar gain, electric vehicle charging points and minimising water runoff.	
Waste	To minimise the generation of waste and encourage greater reuse and recycling of materials in accordance with the waste hierarchy.	Policies BD3 and 4 will require developments to reduce energy consumption and utilise water reuse and recycling. Policy BD4 will require outside space in developments to be available for drying washing, and for recycling containers.	
Minerals and Geodiversity	To minimise the consumption of mineral resources and ensure the sustainable management of these resources	Policy BD1 encourages the use of local materials in construction.	
	To conserve, enhance and restore the condition of geodiversity in the county.	Mining of minerals no longer takes place in the area, and is unlikely to reoccur given the AONB and WHS protections, therefore the NDP does not refer to this.	
Soil	To minimise the use of undeveloped land and protect and enhance soil quality.	Policy AD8 will protect the spaces between settlements and prevent new building on undeveloped land. Policies AD11 and 12 will encourage biodiversity and protect soil quality.	
	To encourage and safeguard local food production.	Policy AD13 will support proposals for allotment sites. Policy BD4 will support developments including space for residents to grow food.	
Air	To reduce air pollution and ensure air quality continues to improve.	Policy RE1 supports renewable energy schemes, to minimise use of fossil fuels.	
Water	To reduce the risk of flooding and vulnerability to flooding, sea level rise and coastal erosion.	Policy BD2 requires developments to take account of flood risk, and not use hard landscaping which leads to excess runoff.	
	To maintain and enhance water quality and reduce consumption and increase efficiency of water use.	Policy BD3 encourages water harvesting and reuse.	

Sustainability Check of the St Just NDP			
Theme	Sustainability Objective	Comment	Likely Impact
Biodiversity	To conserve, enhance and restore the condition and extent of biodiversity in the county and allow its adaptation to climate change.	Policy AD8 will protect open spaces between settlements. Policies AD11 and AD12 require developments to conserve biodiversity, carry out wildlife surveys and protect habitats, and carry out tree planting. Policy CD2 requires developments to be appropriately landscaped.	
Landscape	To protect and enhance the quality of the natural, historic and cultural landscape and seascape.	Policy AD4 requires development to follow guidance from the WHS and its management plan. Policy AD9 will protect valuable vistas and panoramas.	
Maritime	To encourage clean, healthy, productive and diverse waters; To protect coastal areas and ensure sustainable maritime environments.		
Historic Environment	To protect and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment.	Policy AD3 requires developments to consider the impact on the heritage assets and landscape character. Policy AD4 requires developments to follow the guidance of the WHS. Policy AD8 protects the spaces between settlements. Policy BD6 protects existing trees and Cornish hedges.	
Design	To promote and achieve high quality, locally distinctive design, sustainable land use and sustainable built development.	Policies AD1 and 2 will limit the size of developments and protect the Conservation Areas. Policy BD1 will encourage vernacular design, and also innovative design where it does not have a harmful impact. Policy BD2 will encourage sustainable development. Policy BD6 will protect traditional and historic buildings.	
Social Inclusion	To reduce poverty and social exclusion and provide opportunities for all to participate fully in society.	Policies AH1, AH2, AH3 and AH4 will encourage affordable housing and housing for those with a local connection. Policy AH5 encourages the provision of accessible housing for older people.	
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	To reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.		

Sustainability Check of the St Just NDP			
Theme	Sustainability Objective	Comment	Likely Impact
Housing	To meet the needs of the local community as a whole in terms of general market, affordable, adaptable and decent housing.	Policies AH1 to AH6 are all designed to assist in providing good and affordable housing. Policy BD5 will try to mitigate traffic problems by providing suitable off-street parking in new developments.	
Health, Sport and Recreation	To improve health through the promotion of healthier lifestyles and improving access to open space and health, recreation and sports facilities.	Policy BD4 will encourage recreational space and landscaping in developments, and the provision of space for residents to grow food. Policy AD encourages access to footpaths, and AD13 the provision of allotments.	
Economic Development	To support a balanced and low carbon economy that meets the needs of the area and promotes a diverse range of quality employment opportunities.	Policy CD1 supports sustainable commercial development. Policy CD3 encourages appropriate business redevelopment, rather than residential. Policy CD5 encourages development which will provide employment opportunities, where appropriate and sustainable.	
Education and Skills	To maximise accessibility for all to the necessary education, skills and knowledge to play a full role in society.		
Transport and Accessibility	To improve access to key services and facilities by reducing the need to travel and by providing safe sustainable travel choices. To reduce traffic congestion and minimise transport related greenhouse gas emissions.	Policy BD4 encourages walking links, footpaths, cycle paths and links to bus stops. Policy CD5 will hope to provide local employment. Policy BD5 will try to reduce congestion by requiring the provision of off-street parking.	
Energy	To encourage the use of renewable energy, increase energy efficiency and security and reduce fuel poverty.	Policies BD2 and BD3 encourage renewable energy and efficiency. Policies RE1, RE2 and RE3 encourage renewable energy projects.	

Appendix [2/3]: The Sustainability Check Results Summary

Key:

-	Likely to undermine the Sustainability Objective
+/-	Likely to neither undermine or contribute to meeting the Sustainability Objective
+	Likely to support the Sustainability Objective
0	Impacts unknown or Sustainability theme/objective(s) irrelevant to this element of the NDP

Theme	Potential Impact of St Just Draft NDP
1 Climate Factors	
2 Waste	
3 Minerals & Geodiversity	
4 Soil	
5 Air	
6 Water	
7 Biodiversity	
8 Landscape	
9 Maritime	
10 Historic Environment	
11 Design	
12 Social Inclusion	
13 Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour	
14 Housing	
15 Health, Sport & Recreation	
16 Economic Development, Regeneration & Tourism	
17 Education & Skills	
18 Transport & Accessibility	
19 Energy	