

1.0 NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

Copeland Borough Council (as the Local Planning Authority for Copeland Borough) in conjunction with White Young Green (WYG) are developing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to assist the regeneration of Pow Beck Valley in the Kells ward of Whitehaven, Cumbria. Once adopted, the SPD will be a material consideration when determining planning applications in the area. In due course the SPD will be incorporated into the Local Development Framework (LDF) being developed by Copeland Borough Council to replace the existing Copeland Local Plan (2001-2016).

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process through which the sustainability of a plan under preparation is assessed. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires Local Planning Authorities to carry out SA of the documents which make up their LDF. This is to compel Local Planning Authorities to work towards achieving sustainable development thus enabling residents to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life for future generations. SA addresses social, economic and environmental issues in an integrated manner.

Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) it is a requirement that plans (setting out a framework for development and likely to have significant environmental effects) are subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Local Planning Authorities are also required to carry out SEA of the documents which make up their LDF under these regulations.

White Young Green Environmental (WYGE) has been commissioned by Copeland Borough Council to undertake a combined SA and SEA of the Pow Beck Valley SPD. The combined approach to Sustainability Appraisal adopted by WYGE is simply referred to as SA throughout this Sustainability Report.

1.2 Development of the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Cumbria County Council's Sustainability Team has developed objectives for use in the SA of planning documents across Cumbria. These objectives were developed and agreed with each of the District Authorities, statutory consultees (Environment Agency, English Heritage, English Nature and the Countryside Agency), and the North West Regional Planning Body. The Sustainable Development Framework for Cumbria has therefore been used to appraise the Pow Beck Valley SPD.

To ensure that the SA framework for Cumbria was up-to-date and relevant to the Pow Beck Valley, WYGE also undertook the following activities:

- Review of key plans and programmes of specific relevance to the Pow Beck Valley SPD;
- Collation of social, economic and environmental baseline data;
- Identification of the current social, economic and environmental situation in the Whitehaven area; and
- Identification of key sustainability issues.

A Scoping Consultation Document was sent to all statutory consultees in November 2006 to allow for comments on the proposed approach to the SA.

1.3 Sustainability Appraisal of the Pow Beck Valley Supplementary Planning Document and Associated Options

The Sustainable Development Framework for Cumbria has been used to appraise the Pow Beck Valley SPD and related options.

The Pow Beck Valley SPD is designed to help implement the existing Copeland Local Plan Policies associated with the site; EMP 3: Employment Opportunity Sites, SVC 13: Protection of

Open Space, and ENV 9: Areas of Local Landscape Importance. These Local Plan policies have not undergone SA as the Local Plan was produced before the statutory requirement for SA came into force. Therefore, the SA considered three options for the SPD: 'do nothing'; implementation of the Copeland Local Plan Policies (EMP 3, SVC 13 and ENV 9) on their own; and implementation of these policies with the Pow Beck Valley SPD.

The SA identified a number of likely social, economic and environmental effects associated with implementation of the Pow Beck Valley SPD. Effects were identified as being of a beneficial, adverse or unknown nature.

Potential beneficial effects of the Pow Beck Valley SPD (*not an exhaustive list*) include:

- Improvements to, and provision of, a range of sports and recreation facilities within the development site, which have associated community and health benefits;
- Improvements to the pedestrian/cycle and transport network within the development site and to the surrounding area, which will improve accessibility to recreation facilities and open space within the site;
- Encouragement of walking and cycling through the provision of footpaths/cycleways throughout the development and to the surrounding area; and
- Provision of a well designed, high quality built environment on the development site, which will help to improve the attractiveness of Pow Beck Valley.

Potential adverse effects of the Pow Beck Valley SPD (*not an exhaustive list*) include:

- Potential for impacts upon cultural heritage and archaeology within the Pow Beck Valley area, in particular known sites of archaeological importance within and adjacent to the site and neighbouring Corkickle Conservation Area;
- Potential for car parking provision and road network improvements to encourage private vehicle use;
- Potential for impacts upon biodiversity, in particular disruption of protected and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species which may be present within the Pow Beck Valley area. However, the ADF highlights the need to protect habitats and species, in particular those listed in the Cumbria BAP;
- Presence of Japanese Knotweed within the site. However, the ADF acknowledges the need to prevent the spread of Japanese Knotweed and acknowledges that Japanese Knotweed must be disposed of properly;
- Potential loss of greenfield aspects of the development site;
- Temporary, short term impacts associated with construction of the development;
- Potential increase in energy consumption, water consumption and waste production once the development is in use;
- Potential for development to result in pollution to surface water and groundwater;
- Potential for new development to affect surface water run-off rates and impact upon the floodplain. However, the ADF proposes a number of measures which should help to reduce flood risk;
- Increased surface water run-off due to impermeable surfaces; and
- Potential for contaminated land, which could have an indirect impact upon health and biodiversity should contamination be disturbed.

Mitigation measures to maximise beneficial effects and minimise adverse effects of the Pow Beck Valley SPD have been developed. These should be incorporated into the development of the Pow Beck Valley SPD. The Pow Beck Valley SPD presents significant opportunities to make use of best practice sustainable design and construction techniques. This could include the use of recycled materials in construction, the installation of energy efficient lighting and heating systems, the use of rainwater/greywater recycling systems and the provision of SuDS as part of development, which will help to reduce surface water run-off and flood risk. There will also be an opportunity to incorporate renewable energy technologies within development. Development should achieve a BREEAM rating of at least 'Very Good', with an aim to achieve 'Excellent' where

possible. Should the development include residential housing, all housing should meet a Code for Sustainable Homes rating of at least Level 3 with an aim to achieve Level 4 or above.

A set of targets and indicators have been developed. These should be used to monitor performance of the Pow Beck Valley SPD against the SA objectives.