



# RAPID SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES – A GUIDE



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## INTRODUCTION

This report explains how a Rapid Sustainability Appraisal (RSA) can be carried out for Community Strategies (including Community Plans, Sustainable Community Strategies etc) and Local Area Agreements.

RSA is different from the formal, comprehensive sustainability appraisal process used for Development Plan Documents or Regional Spatial Strategies<sup>1</sup>: it is less focused on alternatives, less evidence-based, and much quicker. However, it can inform participants about sustainability and make Community Strategies much more sustainable and robust.

## SECTION I: BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A stand-alone sustainability appraisal guide that contained examples of implementation was produced as part of the Regional Sustainability Framework (RSF). It was designed to be used by anyone, regardless of the type and size of organisation or plan. See [www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/sustainability\\_rsf.html](http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/sustainability_rsf.html)
- 1.2 This rapid guide is the result of research commissioned by regional partners in 2007 to investigate a pilot approach to the RSA of Sustainable Community Strategies (CS) and Local Area Agreements (LAA). This guide is a starting point to help develop a suitable approach and can be used alongside or separately from the RSF appraisal guide.

## SECTION 2: HOW TO CARRY OUT RSA

### 2.1 Main steps

2.1.1 The main steps to carrying out RSA of a Community Strategy or LAA are:

- Be clear about why you are carrying it out
- Determine who should be involved
- Collect evidence
- Set up the appraisal framework and appraisal table
- Carry out and document the appraisal
- Follow through: change the Community Strategy or LAA as appropriate.

### 2.2 Be clear about why you are carrying out the appraisal

2.2.1 The RSA should have a clear purpose. This will depend on the stage of the Community Strategy or LAA, and in turn will influence how the sustainability appraisal is carried out.

Figure 1 (below) shows different purposes, appraisal questions, and structures for the appraisal process.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, it does not fulfil the legal requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 or Environmental Protection of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

**Figure 1 - Purpose, main question and process for sustainability appraisal**

Appraisal purpose	Appraisal question	Likely appraisal process
Development of a new Community Strategy or LAA	What could/should our CS/LAA say about different aspects of sustainability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering evidence</li> <li>• Brainstorming using the appraisal framework to help draft the CS/LAA</li> <li>• A later appraisal of a draft CS/LAA using the framework, to fine-tune the final CS/LAA</li> </ul>
Update of an existing Community Strategy or LAA	How can our CS/LAA be revised to make it as sustainable as possible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering evidence</li> <li>• Appraising the existing CS/LAA to get ideas for the update</li> <li>• A later appraisal of the draft updated CS/LAA, to fine-tune it</li> </ul>
Fine-tuning of a draft Community Strategy or LAA	How can our CS/LAA be as sustainable as possible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering evidence</li> <li>• Appraisal of the draft CS/LAA using the appraisal framework</li> </ul>
Choice between different options for Community Strategy or LAA themes, implementation measures etc.	Which option is more sustainable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering evidence</li> <li>• Appraisal and comparison of the options using the appraisal framework</li> <li>• A later appraisal of the preferred option, to fine-tune the option</li> </ul>
Identification of actions to implement the Community Strategy or LAA	What actions should we take in year X to implement our CS/LAA sustainably?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering evidence</li> <li>• Brainstorming of actions using the appraisal framework</li> </ul>

### 2.3 Determine who should be involved in the appraisal

2.3.1 A sustainability appraisal is best carried out in a group; allowing ideas to be shared about the impacts of Community Strategy/LAAs and how the Community Strategy/LAAs could be fine-tuned to be more sustainable.

2.3.2 Possible appraisal group members are:

- *Local Strategic Partners* know the Community Strategy/LAA and are the ones that would need to change and implement it
- *Local authority officers* understand the links between the Community Strategy/LAA and the local authority's activities, and may have experience of carrying out sustainability appraisal on their own plans
- *Members of the public* know the local area, and this may be a way of getting them involved in developing the Community Strategy/LAA
- *People from outside the authority*, such as regional planning officers or consultants, can suggest ideas and good practice from other authorities.

### 2.4 Collect evidence

2.4.1 Collecting evidence about the present situation in the local authority helps to:

- Identify areas for improvement

- Identify strengths which the Community Strategy/LAA can build on
- Provide some basic information about the local authority for people who are not very familiar with it.

2.4.2 Only a small amount of evidence is needed, roughly 1-3 pages of information about the area's strengths and weaknesses. Useful sources of information include:

- *Audit Commission Area Profile*. This provides local authority specific information on about 80 issues. It allows these to be compared against the national situation or other nearby local authorities, past trends etc. Visit [www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.areaprofiles.audit-commission.gov.uk); choose 'select an area'; type your local authority name under b); and look for 'data profile'.
- *Sustainability appraisal of the local authority's Core Strategy* (the spatial strategy for the authority; previously the development plan). This should provide a list of sustainability issues the local authority faces, possibly with supporting data. As it focuses on spatial planning issues it could under-represent social and economic issues.
- *Annual Monitoring Reports for the local authority*. These provide snapshots of conditions in the local authority, possibly with information about how these conditions have changed over time.
- *Surveys of local residents, previous work for the Community Strategy, etc.*

**Figure 2 - Example Problems Identified in a Sustainability Appraisal of a Core Strategy**

- Lack of affordable housing
- Areas of relative deprivation
- Fear of crime disproportionate to actual level of crime
- Meeting the demands and needs of an ageing population
- High number of residents in employment travelling far to work
- High car use and levels of congestion
- Increasing threat of flooding
- Government waste targets are not being met

## 2.5 Set up the appraisal framework and appraisal table

2.5.1 An **appraisal framework** is a list of sustainability objectives (statements of intent) that together cover the full range of sustainability issues. The Regional Sustainability Framework (RSF) is an example of an appraisal framework. The appraisal framework is then used as a structure for testing the sustainability of the Community Strategy/LAA.

2.5.2 There are two main ways of setting up an appraisal framework:

- Adapt the RSF to the specific conditions of the local authority
- Use the framework from the sustainability appraisal of the local authority's Core Strategy. This framework is more locally specific than the RSF, but due to its spatial focus it may not cover the full range of issues that should be covered in a Community Strategy/LAA.

2.5.3 Figure 3 shows the RSF; the sustainability appraisal framework for a typical local authority Core Strategy; and some issues that might need to be kept in mind when using either of them to appraise a Community Strategy/LAA.

**Figure 3 - Things to Keep in Mind when Setting up an Appraisal Framework**

<b>Regional Sustainability Framework</b>	<b>Sustainability appraisal framework for a typical local authority Core Strategy</b>
1. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home	A. To provide sufficient housing to enable people to live in a home suitable to their needs and which they can afford
2. To improve the health and well-being of the population and reduce inequalities in health	B. To facilitate the improved health and wellbeing of the whole population, including enabling people to stay independent
3. To reduce poverty and social exclusion and close the gap between the most deprived areas in the South East and the rest of the region	C. To reduce poverty and social exclusion for all sectors of the community
4. To raise educational achievement levels across the region and develop the opportunities for everyone to acquire the skills needed to find and remain in work	<p>“We need to reword this as ‘... in the district and the rest of the district’”</p>
5. To reduce crime and the fear of crime	D. To create and maintain safer and more secure communities
6. To create and sustain vibrant communities which recognise the needs and contributions of all individuals	
7. To improve accessibility to all services and facilities (including the countryside and the historic environment)	
8. To encourage increased engagement in cultural activity across all sections of the community in the South East	
9. To ensure high and stable levels of employment so everyone can benefit from the economic growth of the region	E. To maintain high rates of employment, economic activity and competitiveness
10. To sustain economic growth and competitiveness across the region	<p>“Can we merge some objectives to shorten our framework?”</p>
11. To stimulate economic revival in priority regeneration areas	F. To provide for appropriate commercial development opportunities to meet the needs of the economy
12. To develop a dynamic, diverse and knowledge-based economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities	<p>“These issues may not be a specific concern for our Core Strategy, which is mostly a spatial strategy, but should they be covered in our framework for the Community Strategy?”</p>
13. To develop and maintain a skilled workforce to support long-term competitiveness of the region	
14. To improve efficiency in land use through the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings, including re-use of materials from buildings, and encourage urban renaissance	G. To make the best use of previously developed land and existing buildings, encouraging sustainable construction
<p>“We are concerned about soil, noise and light even though they aren’t in the RSF. We’ll add them to our framework”</p>	H. To reduce land contamination and safeguard soil quality and quantity
	I. To ensure noise and light pollution is reduced

Regional Sustainability Framework	Sustainability appraisal framework for a typical local authority Core Strategy
15. To reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to public well-being, the economy and the environment	J. To protect public wellbeing by minimising the harm from flooding
16. To reduce air pollution and ensure air quality continues to improve	K. To ensure air quality continues to improve
17. To address the causes of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and ensure that the South East is prepared for its impacts	L. To address the causes of climate change
18. To conserve and enhance the region's biodiversity	M. To conserve and enhance biodiversity within the plan area
19. To protect, enhance and make accessible for enjoyment, the region's countryside and historic environment	N. To protect, enhance and where appropriate, make accessible the natural, archaeological and historic environments and cultural assets, for the benefit of both residents and visitors
20. To improve the efficiency of transport networks by reducing congestion; and to enhance the proportion of travel by sustainable modes through facilitating modal shifts	O. To reduce road congestion and traffic related pollution levels by encouraging and improving travel choice and reducing the need for travel by car/lorry
21. To increase the level of resource efficiency within the region	P. To reduce the global, social and environmental impact of consumption of resources
22. To reduce waste generation and disposal, and achieve the sustainable management of waste	Q. To reduce waste generation and disposal, and achieve the sustainable management of waste
23. To maintain and improve the water quality of the region's rivers, groundwaters and coasts, and achieve sustainable water resources management	R. To maintain and improve the water quality of the region's rivers and groundwater, and to encourage the sustainable use of water
24. To increase energy efficiency, and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources in the region	S. To increase energy efficiency, and the production and use of renewable energy

"We don't have particular problems with air pollution so we'll fine-tune this RSF objective to better represent conditions in our authority."

2.5.4 Once the appraisal framework has been established, it provides the basis for the **appraisal table**. Possible structures for the appraisal table are shown below. (See case studies for other examples.)

2.5.5 Early brainstorming for the development of a new Community Strategy or LAA should ask: "What could/should our Community Strategy/LAA say about this sustainability objective?" eg

Sustainability objective	Ideas for what the CS/LAA could say (or for how to implement the CS/LAA)

list ideas here

- 2.5.6 To identify actions to implement the Community Strategy or LAA ask: “What actions should we take in year X to implement our CS/LAA in a sustainable manner?”
- 2.5.7 When updating an existing Community Strategy/LAA examine: “How can our strategy/ LAA be revised to make it as sustainable as possible?”
- 2.5.8 To fine-tune a draft Community Strategy/LAA check: “How can our final CS/LAA be made as sustainable as possible?”

Sustainability objective	What does the existing (or draft) CS/LAA say?	Suggested changes
	Theme L says...	we're happy with this, no change needed
	Theme B says...	we could do better
	Theme B should be changed to....	
	not covered in existing CS	Theme F should include...
	we think that this should be covered	

- 2.5.9 For a choice between different options for Community Strategy or LAA themes, implementation measures etc think about: “Which option is more sustainable?”

Sustainability objective	Option			Preferred option
	A	B	C	
	-	+	0	B is preferred because...
	+	++	+	
	--	0	--	
	-	+	-	
				this one!

## 2.6 Carry out and document the appraisal

- 2.6.1 Organise the appraisal session. Typically it could last half a day and comprise:
  - 15 minutes Introductions, explanation of the purpose and structure of the appraisal process
  - 15 minutes Look at and discuss evidence
  - 2 - 2.5 hours Appraise the Core Strategy/LAA
  - 15 minutes Discuss main messages and next steps.
- 2.6.2 At the start of the appraisal session, provide copies of the evidence and blank appraisal tables for everyone.
- 2.6.3 For each sustainability objective, ask the appraisal question; discuss it in the group; and record the answer in the table. Remember that **the appraisal process is meant to improve the Community Strategy LAA, not just describe its impacts**. So discuss ways of reducing or eliminating any negative impacts of the strategy, increasing its benefits, etc.
- 2.6.4 The case studies show different examples of results of appraisal processes and how they might be recorded.

## **2.7 Follow through: change the community strategy or LAA where appropriate**

- 2.7.1 Carrying out RSA is useless if the appraisal's recommendations are not followed through. Make use of the good ideas raised by the appraisal: talk to the right people, ensure that the strategy is changed, implement the proposed actions.

## **SECTION 3: BENEFITS OF RAPID SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL**

- 3.1 The benefits of RSA include:
- Confirmation that a Sustainable Community Strategy really is sustainable, or ideas for how to make it more sustainable
  - A better understanding by participants about what sustainability is
  - An opportunity for the champions of different Community Strategy/LAA themes to discuss the document as a whole and cross-thematic issues
  - New ideas about how the Community Strategy can be implemented in a sustainable manner.

## Part 2: Case Studies

This section describes six rapid sustainability appraisals (RSA) of Community strategies/LAAs carried out by local authorities in the South East:

- A) Crawley draft Community Strategy
- B) Elmbridge Sustainable Community Strategy
- C) Hastings Community Strategy and Local Area Agreements
- D) Kent draft Local Area Agreement
- E) Mole Valley Community Plan
- F) Wokingham emerging Local Area Agreement

### A) Crawley draft Community Strategy

The RSA of Crawley's draft Community Strategy was carried out over two hours in three small groups composed of officers from Crawley, other nearby local authorities, and the Regional Assembly. It involved:

- A brief review of baseline data from the sustainability appraisal of Crawley's Core Strategy and the Audit Commission's Area Profiles which suggested that conditions in Crawley are quite similar to those in the South East region generally
- Analysis of the draft Community Strategy's visions, aims, strategic objectives and indicators using the Regional Sustainability Framework objectives.

Extract from the appraisal:

<b>RSF objective</b>	<b>Covered by which Community Strategy priorities etc?</b>	<b>Suggestions for change</b>
7. Improve accessibility to all services and facilities?	Covered by a range of priorities, eg Community Cohesion (access to retail, community, social services); Social Inclusion (decent home); Young People (social and leisure activities)	Young People objectives could include access to educational facilities. Generally could better stress access to open space and green infrastructure.
8. Encourage increased engagement in cultural activity across all sections of the community in the South East?	Covered by a range of priorities, notably those for Community Cohesion (access to social, community and retail services) Health and Wellbeing (access to healthy lifestyles and healthy environment)	The CS stresses provision of cultural facilities, but doesn't directly promote use of, or participation in, activities. Should this be stressed more?
14. Improve efficiency in land use through the re-use of previously developed land and existing buildings, including re-use of materials from buildings, and encourage urban renaissance?	not covered	Include something on this, for instance in the environment (under high standards for new development)

Possible changes or additions to the strategy were identified. These included the potential need to:

- More clearly emphasise the economic benefits of efficient use of resources, for instance reducing energy consumption
- Encourage the provision of outdoor recreation and leisure facilities as a way of improving people's health
- More clearly focus on optimising benefits and minimising costs of Gatwick Airport.

The appraisal also identified some possible ways of improving the structure and implementation of the Community Strategy, for instance that some of the proposed indicators for which new data would need to be collected could be substituted with existing monitoring information; and that a statement of actions could help to ensure that the strategic objectives are implemented.

## B) Elmbridge Sustainable Community Strategy

The RSA of the Elmbridge Sustainable Community Strategy aimed to provide ideas for how the strategy could evolve and be implemented in a sustainable manner. The appraisal was carried out over three hours by six members of the Local Strategic Partnership, one local authority officer, two regional assembly officers and a consultant. It involved:

- A brief discussion of baseline data from the sustainability appraisal of the Elmbridge Core Strategy and the Audit Commission's Area Profiles, which identified issues where Elmbridge is doing better or worse than the average for the South East region
- A brief comparison of the sustainability appraisal objectives for the Elmbridge Core Strategy and the Regional Sustainability Framework (RSF) objectives. The latter were chosen as the basis for the appraisal because they covered a wider range of social and economic issues
- A group discussion, for each RSF objective, of existing issues and problems in the borough; what action is already being taken in the borough to deal with those issues; and how the Sustainable Community Strategy could further promote the objective and deal with the issues.

Extract from the appraisal:

<b>RSF objective</b>	<b>What is current situation?</b>	<b>What is already happening in the borough?</b>	<b>What else could be done through the SCS between 2009 and 2012?</b>
6. To create and sustain vibrant communities which recognise the needs and contributions of all individuals	Elmbridge is already very vibrant - lots of local newsletters, amenity and civic groups etc. We have just upgraded all noticeboards	NI7 in LAA is about active citizens etc  Several 'vibrant community' points are already covered in our leaflet "We are what you do"	--
7. To improve accessibility to all services and	Only one train station has full services for disabled		Access Forum needs a voice on the LSP; LSP can support

facilities including the countryside and the historic environment	people		Access Forum work  Shuttle buses from train stations to town centres at commuter times - can the business community support this?
8. To encourage increased engagement in cultural activity across all sections of the community in the South East	There are many dozens of partnerships and forums in Elmbridge  Should there be a different word than 'cultural'? 'Cultural' sounds elitist	Cultural Forum being set up, aims to help replace the cultural strategy	Ensure that Cultural Forum has wide terms of reference, and is clear that 'culture' is a wide-ranging term

In addition to identifying individual ideas for future action, the appraisal highlighted the need to create stronger links between different themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It identified two key cross-cutting issues that could be more clearly stressed throughout the strategy: social deprivation, and the role of the business community.

### **C) Hastings Community Strategy and Local Area Agreements**

The RSA of the Hastings Community Strategy aimed to ensure that future revisions of the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreements will promote sustainable development. The appraisal was carried out over three hours by two local authority officers, two Regional Assembly officers and a consultant. It involved:

- A brief discussion of baseline data from the sustainability appraisal of the Hastings Core Strategy and the Audit Commission's Area Profiles, which identified issues where Hastings is doing better or worse than the average for the South East region. It was felt that the Community Strategy's main emphasis on reducing deprivation and the gap between Hastings and the rest of the region already deals with some of the key problems identified through the data
- Briefly considering how the sustainability objectives for the Hastings Core Strategy link with the RSF objectives. Cultural activity is one of Hastings' fortes, and it was felt that this should be added to the SA objectives
- The Community Strategy's themes and targets were then analysed using the SA objectives for the Core Strategy. Where the Community Strategy did not fully and clearly cover the SA objective, possible changes or additions were identified.

Extract from the appraisal:

<b>Hastings sustainability objective</b>	<b>Covered by what Community Strategy theme?</b>	<b>Possible changes/additions to Community Strategy</b>
5. All sectors of the community have improved accessibility to services, facilities, jobs, and social, cultural and recreational opportunities	7. good to live in target 20 - access to open space	Include target on access to GPs and other key services?
6. Safe and secure environments are created and there is a reduction in crime and the fear of crime	1. safer town target 5 - crime rates target 6 - safe walking target 15 - substance misuse	Take into account links between physical environment and safety (eg Secure by Design through LDF)?
7. Vibrant and locally distinctive communities are created and sustained	7. good to live in target 4 - young people target 10 - harmonious society target 11 - volunteering target 12 - people influence decisions	Emphasise the links to the country and urban parks, beach, sea, marine heritage; consider more active support of farmers' markets, fish markets etc? Make more of Marine Conservation Society accreditation?

Examples of possible changes were the need for the Community Strategy to:

- Better emphasise the general acquisition of skills, not just educational targets
- Emphasise the links between good design of buildings and personal safety
- Better promote the borough's maritime assets and heritage, for instance through more active support of fish markets
- Encourage community use of public facilities, for instance opening schools for community use in the evenings
- More strongly promote reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

## **D) Kent draft Local Area Agreement**

The RSA of Kent's draft LAA priorities was carried out as a group discussion between officers from the local and regional level over one and a half hours as follows:

- Based on information drawn from previous sustainability appraisals carried out in Kent, key sustainability issues were identified
- Sustainability objectives drawn from the appraisal of the Vision for Kent were tested for consistency against those in the Regional Sustainability Framework
- The draft LAA priorities were assessed against Kent's sustainability objectives, and suggested changes were noted.

Extract from the appraisal

<b>Kent sustainability objective</b>	<b>LAA draft priorities that cover sustainability objective?</b>	<b>Possible changes/ additions to LAA draft priorities</b>
18. To reduce the global, social and environmental impact of consumption of resources, including by using sustainably produced and local products and services	Gap	Bit fragmented - should be a thread throughout agreement. Can deliver across priorities. Need to look at how can include across KA2. More work needed. Use of procurement? - Include regeneration strategy.
19. To improve the health and well-being of the population and reduce inequalities in health	Covered	Enough hooks - but need geographically targeted targets.
20. To reduce crime, the fear of crime and disorder		Covered.
21. To ensure high and stable levels of employment	Economic Success & Learning for Everyone	High priority for Kent. But need appropriate targeting.

### **E) Mole Valley Community Plan**

The RSA of Mole Valley's Community Plan aimed to help identify future actions that can promote the themes and objectives of the Community Plan in a sustainable manner. The appraisal was carried out by three officers from Mole Valley, two regional assembly officers and a consultant during two three-hour sessions. The appraisal involved:

- A brief discussion of baseline data from the sustainability appraisal of the Mole Valley Core Strategy and the Audit Commission's Area Profiles, which identified where Mole Valley is doing better or worse than the average for the South East region
- Comparing the sustainability appraisal objectives for the Mole Valley Core Strategy with those of the Regional Sustainability Framework. The great majority of the Regional Sustainability Framework objectives were carried through in Mole Valley's objectives, with the exception of those on waste and education
- Assessing the six themes of the Community Plan using the Mole Valley Core Strategy sustainability appraisal framework plus objectives on waste and education.

Extract from the appraisal:

Theme: C. To improve facilities and support for young people and increase opportunities for young people to have a healthy lifestyle	
<b>Mole Valley sustainability objective</b>	<b>What (if any) kind of action could we take with respect to this theme in 2008 and beyond, to help achieve the following SA objective?"</b>
1. To provide sufficient housing to enable people to live in a home suitable to their needs and which they can afford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Home Buy scheme already being rolled out</li> <li>• Matchmaking service between young people who need homes with older people who have large homes but need help around the house?</li> <li>• Website/information/guidance (or promote existing websites) that allow young people to club together to buy or rent a property</li> </ul>
2. To facilitate the improved health and well-being of the whole population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycling scheme where older people take younger people out on bike trips - already in three estates, but roll out?</li> <li>• Encourage extended opening hours for school playing fields etc. Extended hours for schools generally already done in action plan for young people</li> <li>• Find out about Home Zones - check where funding could come from - and if appropriate tell community development workers about them</li> </ul>
3. To reduce poverty and social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More actively support work placement for young people (in school, excluded pupils, after they leave school); investigate whether/how insurance issue affects this</li> </ul>

Suggested actions for implementing the Community Plan included:

- Provision of information about public transport, walking and cycling facilities to estate agents in the area, to promote sustainable transport choices
- Research into Home Zones - areas designed to give pedestrians priority over cars
- Improved provision for recycling in flats
- Consideration of whether Mole Valley should become a plastic bag free authority
- Use of parish newsletters to carry out surveys of local residents
- Better protection of existing allotments and provision of new ones.

## F) Wokingham emerging Local Area Agreement

The RSA of Wokingham's emerging Local Area Agreement aimed to ensure that the emerging LAA covers all relevant sustainability issues. The appraisal was carried out by a group of local and regional authority officials over three and a half hours. The process involved:

- Identifying, from the Audit Commission Area Profiles, where existing conditions in Wokingham are worse than the regional average
- Identifying sustainability objectives from the sustainability appraisal for the Wokingham Core Strategy that represent these problems
- Discussing whether the LAA draft priorities matched / covered the sustainability objectives
- Where the LAA draft priorities did not fully cover the sustainability objective, suggesting possible changes to the LAA draft priorities.

Extract from the appraisal:

<b>Key sustainability objectives for Wokingham</b>	<b>LAA draft priorities that cover the sustainability objective?</b>	<b>Possible changes/ additions to LAA draft priorities</b>
1. To make provision for local housing needs by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent sustainably constructed and affordable home	4g. Affordable housing 3c. Housing needs for vulnerable groups	Ensure that 4g covers all relevant groups, eg key workers, vulnerable people, ageing population, pockets of rural deprivation
2. To reduce the risk of flooding and the resulting detriment to public well-being, the economy and the environment by ensuring no inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding	4b. Sustainable environment?	Ensure that LAA priorities cover flooding issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce flood risk of new development in line with Wokingham's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</li> <li>• improve awareness of flood risk</li> <li>• implement Wokingham's community resilience plan</li> <li>• investigate whether capital expenditure on flood defence works is needed</li> </ul>
8. To improve accessibility to services, amenities and facilities	4a. Neighbourhood Service / Community Facilities 4d. Transport 2b. Community empowerment?	Ensure that LAA draft priorities cover ways of improving accessibility to services, eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduced congestion</li> <li>• provision of alternatives to the car that match the convenience &amp; cost of car use</li> <li>• locating/providing/keeping services near to where they are needed (eg mobile libraries, ensuring that local shops are kept, providing new services)</li> <li>• support of IT to provide an alternative to the need to travel</li> <li>• designing development to support alternatives to car (eg provision of bike storage)</li> </ul>
9. To reduce road congestion and pollution levels by improving travel facilities and choices		

The appraisal identified the need to consider whether the LAA priorities should:

- Cover flood risk issues
- Discuss ways of improving accessibility to services
- Support local and sustainable resources / goods, for instance through farmers' markets, sustainable procurement within the local authority, support for sustainable resource use in businesses, etc
- Clarify the links between economic prosperity and a good environment.

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