

Cinderford Northern Quarter Area Action Plan

**Sustainability Appraisal - Non Technical Summary
Pre Submission Draft - March 2011**

Forest of Dean District Council

Adopted Version – 23rd February 2012

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FODDC and Homes and Communities Agency


Cinderford Northern Quarter
Pre Submission Draft AAP
Sustainability Appraisal Report – Non
Technical Summary

March 2011

Adopted Version – 23rd February 2012

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1 *THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE PRE SUBMISSION DRAFT AAP FOR REGENERATION OF CINDERFORD NORTHERN QUARTER: NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY*

This Non Technical Summary (NTS) accompanies the Sustainability Appraisal Report (SAR).

1.1 *INTRODUCTION*

Forest of Dean District Council has developed an Area Action Plan (AAP) and Masterplan for the regeneration of Cinderford Northern Quarter (referred to as the “Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan”). The AAP and Masterplan process has involved a number of stages in its evolution, which are described in *Section 2.3* of this NTS. A Sustainability Appraisal (referred to hereafter as “the Appraisal”) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)¹, has been undertaken in order to inform the development of the AAP and Masterplan.

The Appraisal integrates the requirement for, and components of an Environmental Report under the SEA Regulations. The Appraisal has been carried out in order to fulfil legislative requirements and to assist decision-makers in developing an AAP which has thoroughly considered the sustainability of its policy direction, options and chosen interventions, pre-empting potential negative impacts and exploring opportunities to enhance the beneficial impacts of its preferred policy route.

1.2 *THIS REPORT*

This Report comprises the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan for the Regeneration of Cinderford Northern Quarter. It updates the NTS of the previous Sustainability Appraisal Report NTS (“the 2009 Appraisal Report”) which accompanied the Draft AAP and Masterplan published in 2009; hereafter referred to as “the 2009 AAP Preferred Option”. The SA/SEA was reviewed at each stage, no major changes to the impacts of proposals have occurred through to adoption following the April 2011 consultation (as confirmed by the Planning Inspector (report dated 21st December 2011)). This version of the document is therefore taken forward in support of the adopted AAP (February 2012).

As set out in the SEA Regulations, Section 12(3) and Schedule 2(10), the NTS must provide a summary of the information provided in the Appraisal (incorporating SEA) Report. This information and where it can be found in this NTS, is set out in the following table:

NTS Requirement - To provide a short summary of the following key elements:	Where the Information is provided in this NTS
Outline the contents and main objectives of the Draft AAP	Section 2
Explain the relationship of the Draft AAP with other plans, policies and programmes	Section 2
Summarise the environmental characteristics of Cinderford, concentrating on the current state of social, economic and environmental sustainability and problems associated with it	Section 3
Summarise how the baseline is likely to evolve without the Draft AAP	Section 3
Summarise the environmental objectives established at Community or UK level which are relevant to the Draft AAP and how those objectives have been taken into account in the strategy	Section 3
Summarise the likely significant short, medium, long term, cumulative and synergistic effects of the Draft AAP on the list of matters in Schedule 2 (a) to (m)	Section 4
Summarise the measures to prevent or off-set significant adverse effects (if any)	Section 5
Summarise the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including difficulties in terms of gathering information (if any)	Section 2 and 3
Summarise the monitoring measures	Section 5

This NTS report therefore includes a summary of all the information required by the SEA Directive, but has included additional aspects of the Appraisal, rather than just the SEA elements of the assessment.

The reader is also referred to the Sustainability Appraisal Report which this NTS accompanies, for the full details of the findings of the Appraisal. The Table below signposts where the reader can locate further detail, in accordance with the SEA Directive and SEA/SA guidance.

Summary of Requirements of SEA Directive

SEA Directive Requirement	Where this information is provided in the main Appraisal Report	Additional information provided since the 2009 Appraisal
An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme.	Chapter 2	Updated to reflect changes made to the AAP and Masterplan.
Relationship of the plan with other relevant plans and programmes.	Chapter 4 & <i>Annex A</i>	Updated to reflect changes in policy made since 2009.
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.	Chapter 5 & <i>Annex B</i>	Further information provided in regard to the likely evolution of the baseline in the absence of the AAP.
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	Chapter 5 & <i>Annex B</i>	Baseline updated in regard to landscape and visual aspects.
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.	Chapter 5, <i>Annex B</i> & <i>Annex C</i>	Baseline updated in regard to designated water bodies.
The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	<i>Annex B</i> Chapter 6 Table 7.1	No updates to these objectives.
The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors (1).	Chapter 5, 6 & 7	Assessment findings updated as a result of the refinements made to the AAP and consultation comments received.
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.	Chapter 7 & 8	Mitigation and recommendations updated as a result of the refinements made to the AAP and consultation comments received.

(1) These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

SEA Directive Requirement	Where this information is provided in the main Appraisal Report	Additional information provided since the 2009 Appraisal
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.	Chapter 2 & 7, <i>Annex E</i> and <i>Annex F</i>	Updated description of the options development process and justification of the refinements made. Inclusion of a separate section describing difficulties encountered in the Appraisal process.
A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10.	Chapter 8	Monitoring indicators updated to incorporate indicators identified in the SA of the Core Strategy.
A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	This NTS document	NTS updated to reflect changes throughout the report.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Cinderford has been identified by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), previously English Partnerships, as a priority regeneration area for the South West of England under its National Coalfields Programme. The District-wide Local Plan was adopted in November 2005 and sets out policies and proposals to guide development in the Forest of Dean up to 2011. While this sets a broad strategic context for the Northern Quarter and allocates development sites, it does not provide detailed site specific guidance in relation to urban design, landscape, environmental, transport, delivery and phasing. In December 2008 the Cinderford Regeneration Board published the Cinderford Business Plan, which is a 10 year action plan for the regeneration of the town.

The AAP is the next stage in the process, setting out the plans for future development within the Northern Quarter of Cinderford. The development of the AAP and Masterplan has undergone a number of stages, as detailed in *Section 2.3* and *Chapter 3* of this Report, summarised as the following three stages:

1. Consideration of three Preliminary Options, to inform development of the AAP and Masterplan
2. Development of the 2009 Preferred Option, encapsulated in the 'Draft AAP and Masterplan' published in 2009
3. Further refinement of the 2009 Preferred Option to form the Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan (the revised Preferred Option)

2.2 THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE APPRAISAL

Key to the identification of Options, the selection of the 2009 Preferred Option, and the subsequent development of the 2011 Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan, has been the series of independent studies and reports, undertaken on behalf of FoDDC and HCA. These reports have provided a strong evidence base for the Appraisal, enabling a full understanding of the implications of the various Options, from an economic, social and environmental perspective.

The key reports and documents used to inform the development and Appraisal of the 2011 Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan are as follows:

Evidence base

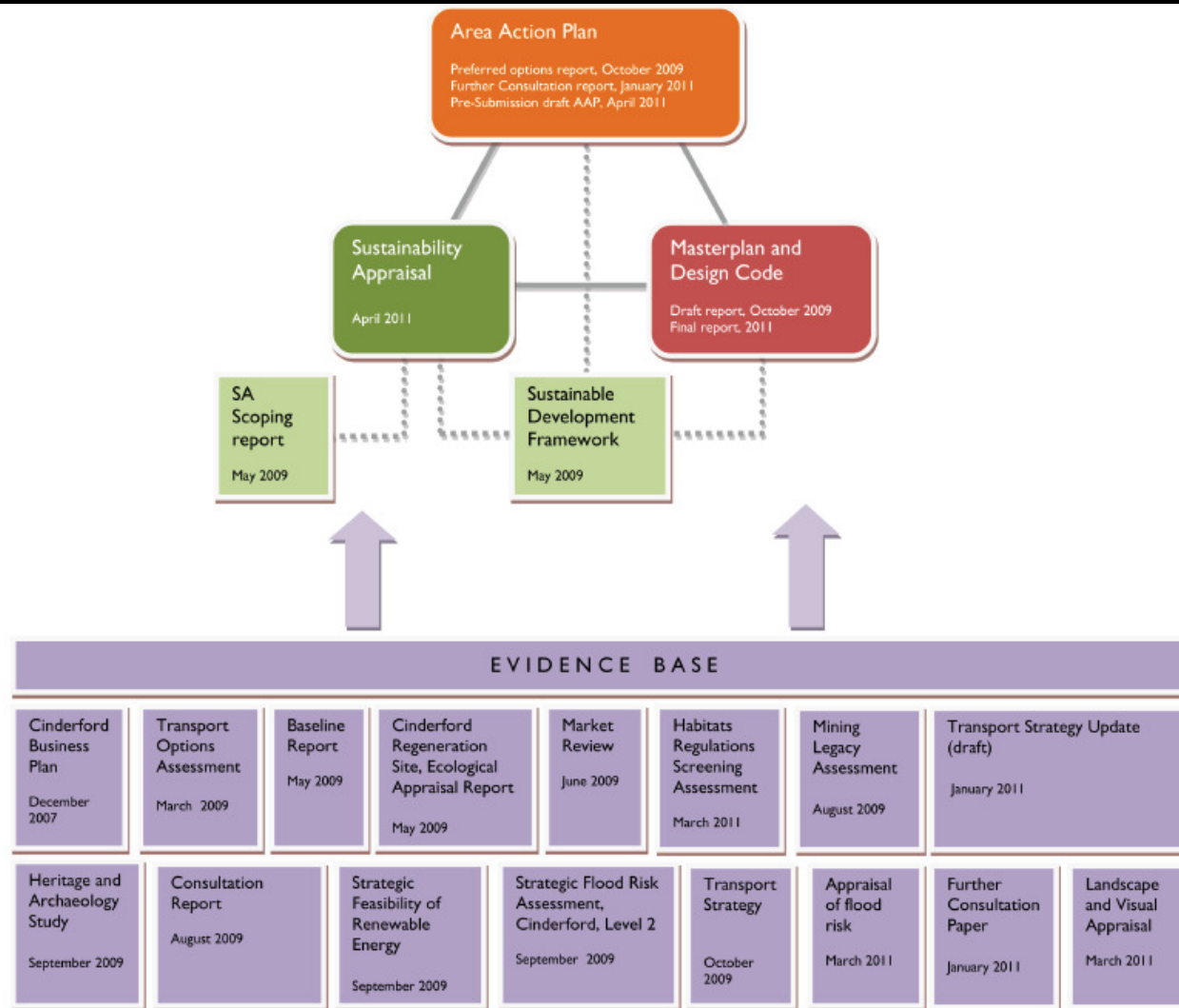
Cinderford Business Plan (2007)
Transport Options Assessment (2009)
Transport Strategy (2009 – updated in 2011)
Baseline Report (2009)
Cinderford Regeneration Site Ecological Appraisal Report (2009)
Market Review (2009)
Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment (2009 - updated in 2011) – see *Annex C*
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Cinderford, Level 2 (2009)
Appraisal of Flood Risk (2009 – updated in 2011) – see *Annex D*
Cinderford Northern Quarter Masterplan and Area Action Plan Consultation Report (2011)
Mining Legacy Assessment (2009)
Heritage and Archaeological Study (2009)
Strategic Feasibility of Renewable Energy (2009)
Landscape and Visual Appraisal (2011)

Other documents

SA Scoping Report (2009)
Sustainability Appraisal (2009 – updated in 2011)
Sustainable Development Framework (2009)
Masterplan and Design Code (2009 – updated in 2011)

Figure 2.1 shows how the Sustainability Appraisal process has linked in with the AAP and Masterplan preparation process, and sets out the evidence base used to inform the Sustainability Appraisal and masterplanning process.

Figure 2.1 How the Sustainability Appraisal fits in with the Wider Process



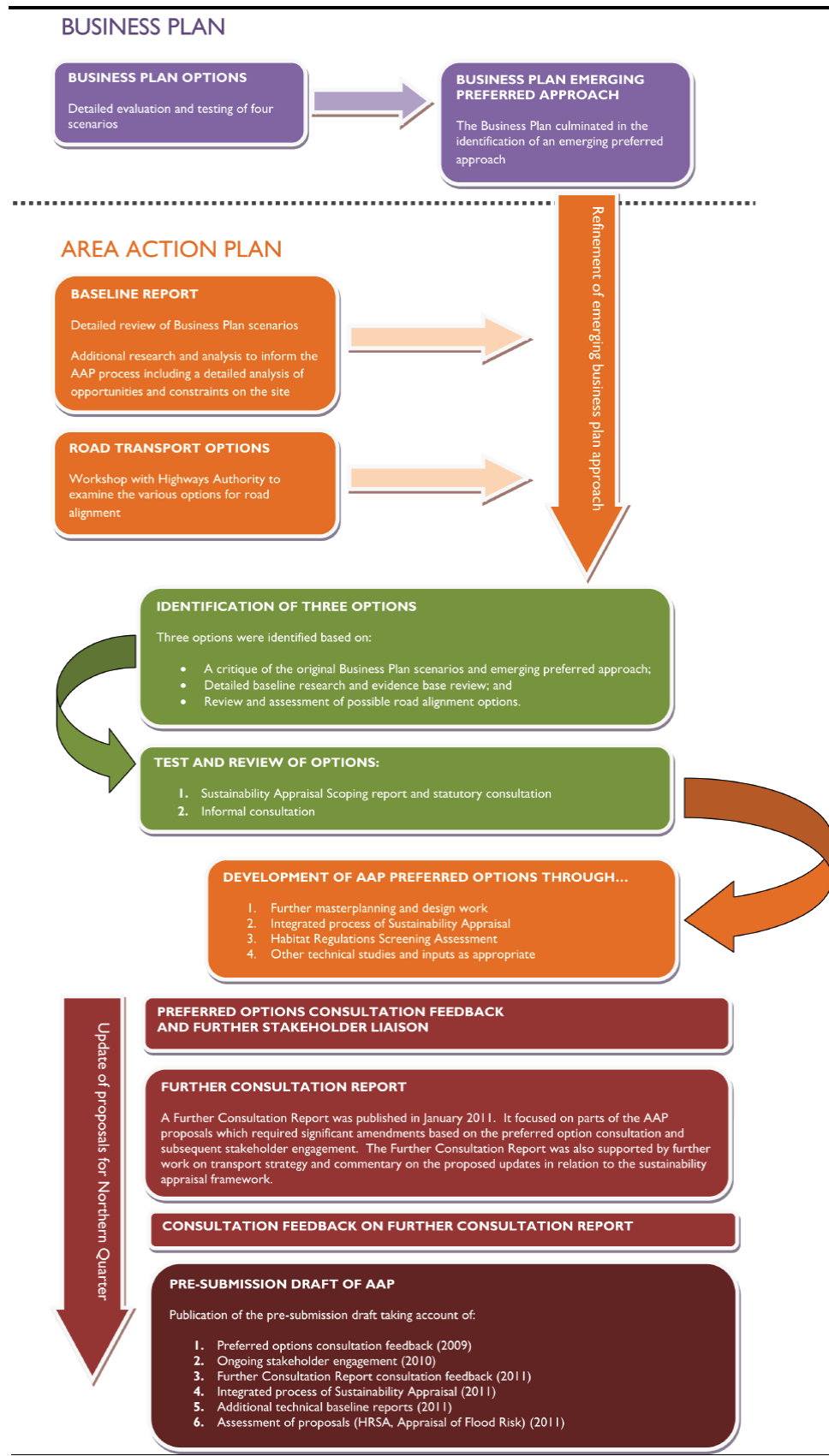
OPTIONS CONSIDERED DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AAP AND MASTERPLAN

Taking the option which was identified through consultation on the Cinderford Business Plan (2007) as the 'preferred option' as a starting point, the AAP drafting team prepared three further variants on this approach (the 'Preliminary Options') through a process of informal consultation in May 2009, as detailed in *Section 3* of the Appraisal Report. These Preliminary Options detailed differing visions of what the mixed use development could comprise, taking into account flood and wider constraints mapping.

Following further appraisal and refinement, the resulting option was confirmed as the 2009 Preferred Option, which was subject to consultation. Further refinement of the AAP and Masterplan was then undertaken in response to consultation comments and other factors. Informal consultation was undertaken prior to the development of the Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan which represents the published scheme arrangement. The concluding step within the process was to undertake a final appraisal of the Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan.

Figure 2.2 provides a summary of the process of developing the Options, through which the Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan emerged.

Figure 2.2 Options Development Process



The Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan for the Northern Quarter aims to facilitate the integration of the Northern Quarter area with the Statutory Forest, Steam Mills and Newtown residential areas, Steam Mills Lake, green spaces and town centre facilities, considering the ways in which sustainability can be embedded within the regeneration of the Cinderford area.

The plans for a mixed use development within the area include provision of a hotel, office space and a potential education hub, along with accommodation for innovation / enterprise businesses, residential accommodation and a multi-purpose community leisure facility. The residential accommodation will provide a mix of unit types and tenures and will include up to 40% affordable housing provision. There will also be provision of safe pedestrian and cycling linkages, as well as improved highways access and the development of public transport facilities to enable easy access between the site and the surrounding areas and facilities.

The objectives of the Draft AAP and Masterplan are as follows:

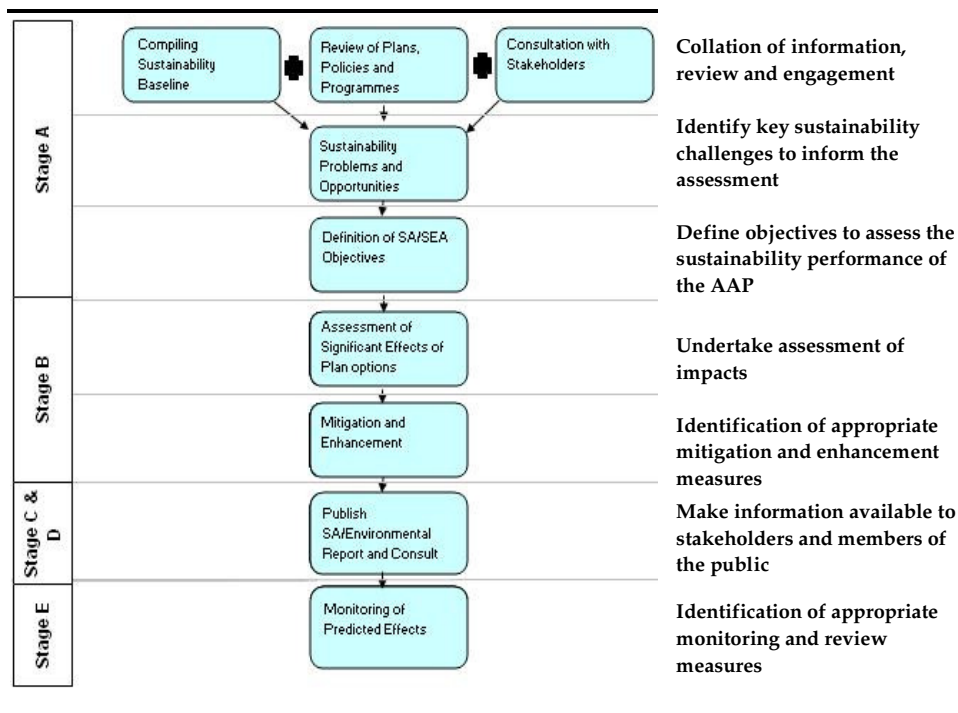
1. To promote high standards of sustainable design including climate change adaptation and mitigation and renewable energy provision;
2. To realise the site's potential as a local amenity centre for surrounding communities;
3. To unlock the development potential of the site through the development of a new spine road which will enhance the accessibility of the Northern Quarter and Cinderford;
4. To achieve sustainable transport patterns through improved accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and buses;
5. To facilitate the regeneration of the Northern Quarter through the development of an educational facility;
6. To ensure that development respects the area's important landscape, habitats and cultural heritage;
7. To protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the Northern Quarter;
8. To deliver an appropriate balance of employment, residential, community and leisure uses across the site;
9. To promote a wide range of leisure activities in the Northern Quarter to promote access to the forest;
10. To ensure that the development is carefully integrated with Steam Mills, New Town and Cinderford Town Centre in terms of amenities and physical connections; and
11. To ensure that the plan is deliverable and has a broad base of support.

The identification of Appraisal objectives – outlined within *Section 3* of the Appraisal Report – informed the development of the 2009 Preferred Option and Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan, ensuring that these objectives aligned with, and reflected the sustainability objectives or aspirations established for the area, and more broadly at regional and national level.

3.1 WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL?

Sustainability Appraisal is a process driven in part by compliance with European and English law⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ and also by best practice. It incorporates both the process of SEA, and its principal output, the Environmental Report, seeking to augment this with thorough and effective integration of all aspects of sustainability. The key stages involved in the SA/SEA process (as per Guidance and the SEA Directive) are detailed overleaf. For a more detailed explanation of the Appraisal process, please refer to Chapter 3 of the SA Report.

Figure 3.1 The Flow of Stages in the Sustainability Appraisal Process



3.2 STRATEGIC REVIEW OF POLICY, PLANS AND PROGRAMMES AND BASELINE CONDITIONS TO INFORM THE APPRAISAL

A review of the wider strategic context (relevant plans, policies and programmes) was undertaken to inform the Appraisal; as required by the Regulations and guidance. In particular, the review identified national ambitions articulated through ‘Securing the Future – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy, the Cinderford Business Plan, and at the

(1) Ibid
 (2) Town and Country Planning Act, 2004

local level, as being shared priorities for the AAP. From the review of policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives, the Appraisal identified the generic policy imperatives which have influenced the preparation of the Pre-Submission Draft AAP and masterplan, and the Appraisal itself.

A review of baseline conditions in the Cinderford area highlighted key issues for consideration, which are outlined both within the main body of the SAR and the accompanying Annexes. The review identified those challenges which were likely to evolve in the absence of the AAP. A full overview of these challenges is provided within the Appraisal Report. These issues, alongside the strategic review of key plans and programmes, collectively informed the selection of key 'sustainability objectives' or aims which were established to inform and assess the development of the AAP. These objectives - categorised into primary and secondary objectives - are set out in the form of a Sustainability Appraisal Framework, which forms the basis for assessment of the AAP and the 'options' which guided its development.

3.3

THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Sustainability Objectives
1) Environmental and Resource Sustainability
1a) To Protect and Enhance the Physical and Built Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure sensitive integration of the development within the wider Cinderford area to maximise sustainability for the town and its surrounding area • To ensure the development does not involve building in areas at risk of flooding or contribute to flooding elsewhere. • To protect and enhance water resources within and surrounding Cinderford • To improve the current low flow situation in Cinderford Brook and in doing so improve water quality and biodiversity. • To investigate opportunities to further reduce existing flood risk within Cinderford • To promote sustainable procurement of both materials and personnel through construction and operation of the development • To reduce the carbon footprint of the development, and its wider area, through design, delivery and operation • To develop new residential building to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 (by 2010 and increasing with Government policy thereafter); non residential Buildings to achieve at least BREEAM excellent or relevant equivalent. • To integrate sustainable waste management facilities and services within the development, to the benefit of it and Cinderford more broadly • To support the improvement of contaminated and derelict land and reduce the impact of unstable land. • To ensure contaminated and derelict land is restored and returned to beneficial use. • To reduce the potential of pollutant emissions impacting on land, through implementing and monitoring the use of best practice environmental management techniques. • To protect and enhance air quality

Sustainability Objectives
1b) Designated & Non-Designated Ecological Sites: Biodiversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To protect and enhance designated and non-designated sites within and adjacent to the development, and across Cinderford • To ensure that the development contributes to the protection of the wider wildlife interest of the district, especially strengthening of links between 'wild' areas to better enable adaptation to climate change
1c) To Promote More Sustainable Forms of Transport Provision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote sustainable access into and out of the area • To promote more sustainable patterns of travel and modes of transport, such as the use of public transport, walking and cycling • To enhance sustainable transport infrastructure • To help reduce the need to travel, such as by ensuring that people can live closer to their work and by improving local access to services • To promote economic patterns that avoid unnecessary dependence on long-distance trade and travel • To reduce the distance to, and/or ease of accessing, schools, shops, places of work and recreation
2) Economic Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote/help facilitate economic sustainability within the area • To enhance infrastructure and services, to support local businesses • To promote sustainable business practice within Cinderford • To enhance the attractiveness of Cinderford as a place for business investment • To diversify the range of employment opportunities within Cinderford • To enhance access to employment and up-skilling opportunities • To promote integration of educational and skills training in line with identified need • To help increase the number of people who stay in/visit the area • To promote sustainable tourism initiatives in the Forest of Dean (such as walking/cycling tourism)
3) Social Sustainability
3a) To Promote Sustainability Skills and Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote and facilitate awareness raising and understanding of sustainability • To promote access to education and vocational skills training
3b) To promote social integration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote social connectivity and integration between and across communities in Cinderford and the area • To enhance the health and wellbeing of residents and workers within Cinderford • To enhance access to social, leisure and sporting facilities in and surrounding Cinderford, including the Forest, for all • To enhance access to social, leisure and sporting facilities in and surrounding Cinderford, including the Forest, for all
3c) To Promote Equality of Opportunity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet identified housing need, in particular, the provision of affordable housing • To promote equality of opportunity and access for all within Cinderford

Sustainability Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure physical and social access to infrastructure, services and opportunities.
3d) To Protect and Enhance the Historical and Cultural Identity of the Area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To protect and enhance local identity and heritage within and across Cinderford • To ensure that the social and cultural heritage of the area is maintained through development works • To support the protection of culturally and historically significant assets and qualities. Not just designated sites and buildings, but also locally valued features and landmarks

3.4 *ASSESSING STRATEGY OPTIONS ('ALTERNATIVES')*

The assessment of alternatives or options is a key requirement of both the SEA Directive and Regulations, and UK Government guidance. Guidance reflects that those options which were considered realistic or feasible, and only such options, should be appraised. In accordance with this, the Appraisal assessed the 3 Preliminary Options which were considered by the AAP drafting team through the process of developing the 2009 Preferred Option, the 2009 Preferred Option itself, and the Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan.

3.5 *DEVELOPING AND ASSESSING THE PRELIMINARY OPTIONS*

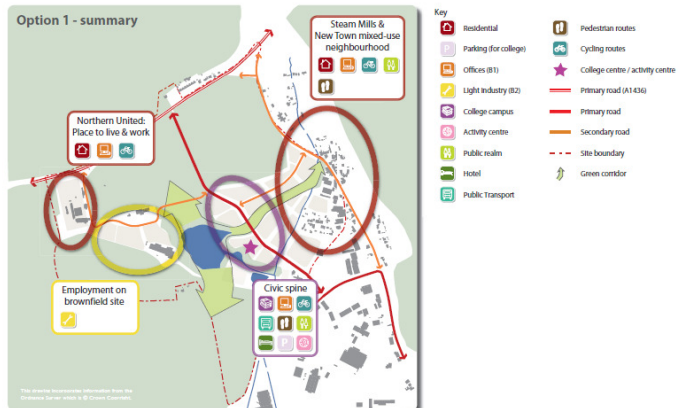
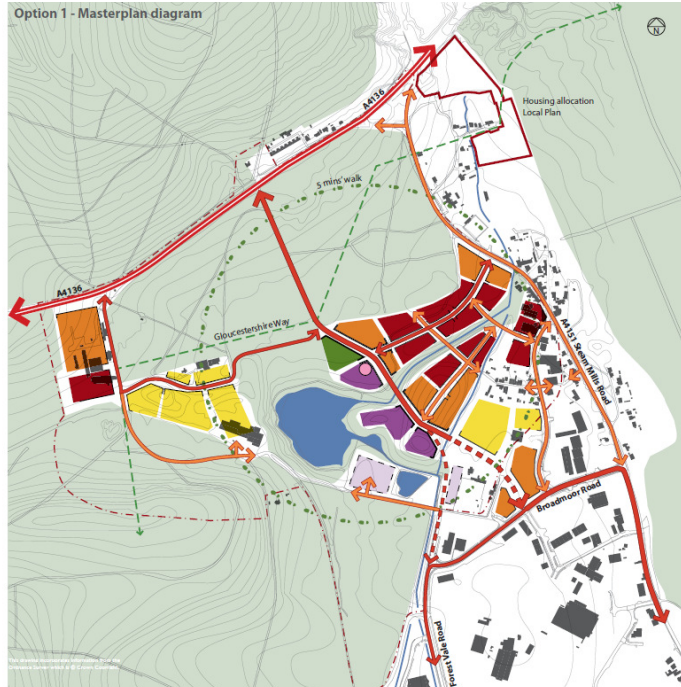
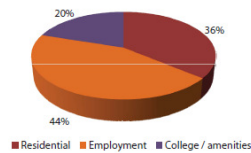
The Preliminary Options were as follows:

- **Option 1: New Civic Spine for Cinderford**
- **Option 2: Campus at the Centre for employment and housing**
- **Option 3: A distinctive local community**

Visualisations of each of these three Preliminary Options are presented in *Box 3.1*, *Box 3.2* and *Box 3.3* below.

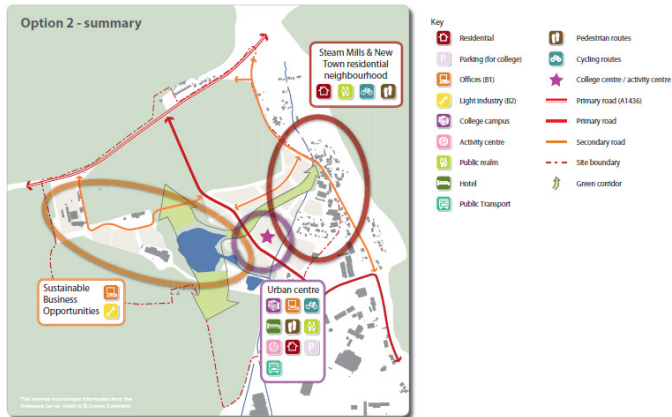
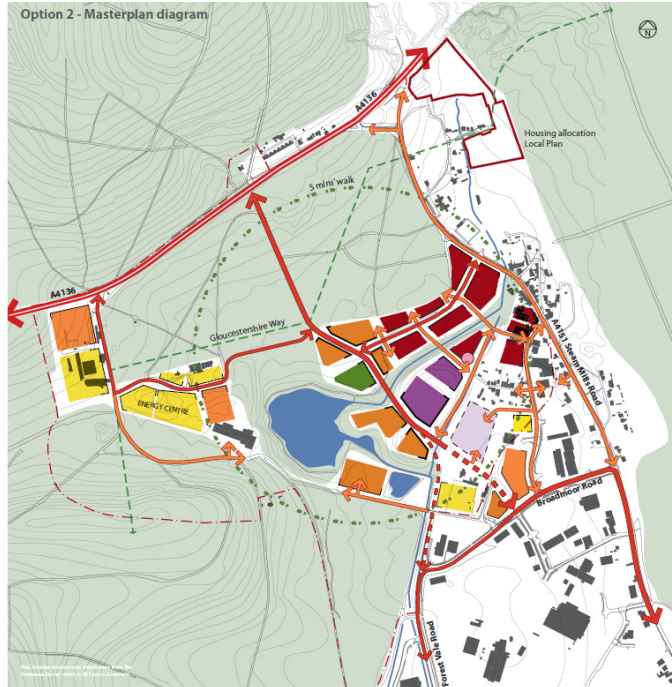
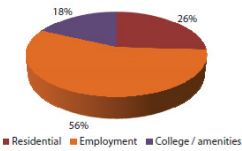
Summary

1. New civic spine to Cinderford with the college / activity centre, hotel and offices located on a new road connecting to Cinderford Town Centre.
2. College / activity centre set close to the lake and related to landscape. The college will have an open campus character with green spaces and water bodies between the buildings, offering spectacular views.
3. Hotel located at the northern gateway to Cinderford.
4. Steam Mills and New Town revitalised with new business spaces and housing connecting through to new civic spine.
5. The Northern United site will provide opportunities for high quality business space.
6. Option 1 assumes the following mix of uses:
 - 36% residential (approximately 130 dwellings);
 - 44% employment; and
 - 20% college / amenities.



Summary

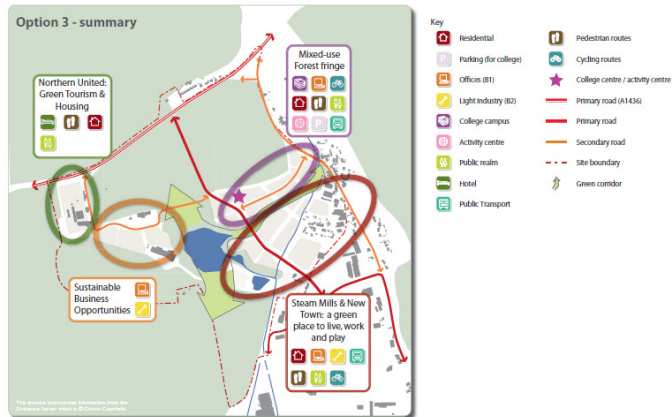
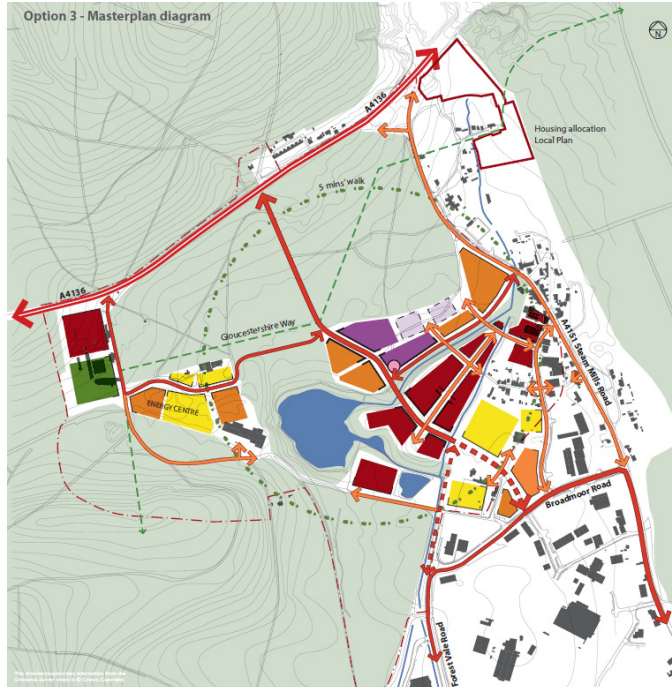
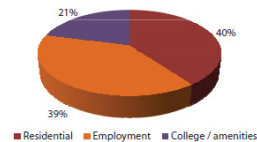
1. College / activity centre creates a central landmark for a place to live and work set in natural landscape.
2. New employment uses will be located along the spine road.
3. High quality green business uses in lake and landscape setting.
4. Steam Mills and New Town consolidated with sustainable housing, closely linked to the forest, lake, college / activity centre and business uses.
5. Hotel located by the lake.
6. Character of the Northern United site retained and regenerated through sympathetic employment uses.
7. Option 2 assumes the following mix of uses:
 - 26% residential (approximately 100 dwellings);
 - 56% employment; and
 - 18% college / amenities.



Summary

1. College / activity centre forms a new northern gateway to Cinderford, drawing from the forest as a key asset and connecting to Steam Mills.
2. East-west link connects the Northern United site to Steam Mills and New Town via new business space, the college and housing.
3. Higher proportion of housing creates a self contained community connecting lake with Steam Mills.
4. Northern United site becomes a destination for green hotel/ tourism and exemplar sustainable housing.
5. Business space provided on selected brown field sites throughout the development.
6. Option 3 assumes the following mix of uses:

- 40% residential (approximately 150 dwellings);
- 39% employment; and
- 21% college / amenities.



The Preliminary Options assessment findings are set out in detail in *Annex E* of the Appraisal Report. The assessment demonstrates that all Preliminary Options create opportunities to deliver sustainability benefits, however, issues of potential negative impact exist with all Options. Consultation with local people and stakeholders indicated that Option 2 was the preferred Masterplan. The diversification of land use, sensitive integration into surrounding environment, enhanced access and connectivity, as well as educational and visitor centres, all appealed to stakeholders.

Option 2 also allocated the greatest proportion of the development site for employment-related land use and it would follow, therefore, that it affords the greatest job creation potential. Further, allocating the Northern United site for

industrial land use constitutes most to preserving the industrial character of that part of the site.

However, the assessment did identify less positive aspects of Option 2, notably: scale of residential land use, ecological impacts and flood risk:

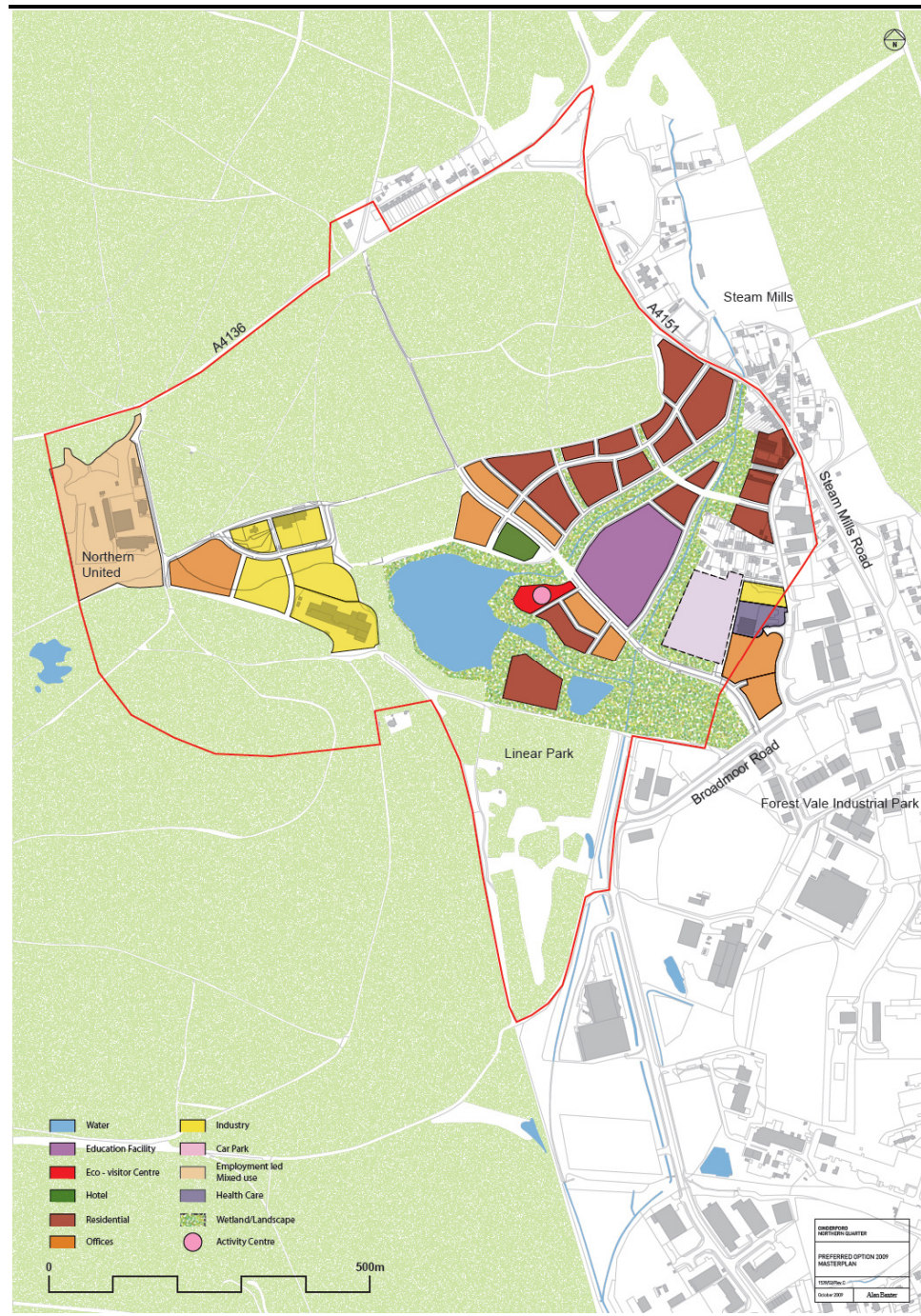
- Option 2 has the lowest proportion of residential land use, which might result in the lowest number of new residents being introduced into the area, making the lowest contribution to FoDDC housing targets.
- As noted in the summary table of the Appraisal of Flood Risk, Option 2 (as with all options) had elements potentially incompatible with planning requirements, primarily in respect of the location of designated industrial units within possible development of Flood Zone 3B.
- As with all Options, Option 2 would have potentially negative effects on habitat and biodiversity, which would require mitigation.

It was recognised that in taking Option 2 as a starting point for the Preferred Option, these key negative elements would need to be addressed. To this end, Option 2 was subject to ongoing refinement and several iterations, to form the 2009 Preferred Option.

3.6

DEVELOPING AND ASSESSING THE 2009 PREFERRED OPTION

Following the identification of Option 2 as the basis for the 2009 Preferred Option, the option was refined and developed, to establish the 2009 Preferred Option for the AAP and Masterplan (shown in *Box 3.4* below).



This assessment of the 2009 Preferred Option was undertaken against the objectives set out in the Appraisal Framework. The matrix setting out the findings of this assessment are presented in *Annex F*. *Annex F* also presents a summary of the assessment findings, and discusses the temporal and cumulative impacts assessed as likely to arise from the 2009 Preferred Option.

4 THE PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT AAP AND MASTERPLAN AND ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the assessment of the 2009 AAP Preferred Option, this Option was further refined in the light of external changes, and following further analysis of responses from the consultation undertaken on this option. A summary of the changes which have been made to the AAP and Masterplan since the 2009 AAP Preferred Option is provided in *Box 4.1*.

Box 4.1 *Changes made since the 2009 AAP Preferred Option*

Major changes to the 2009 Preferred Option:

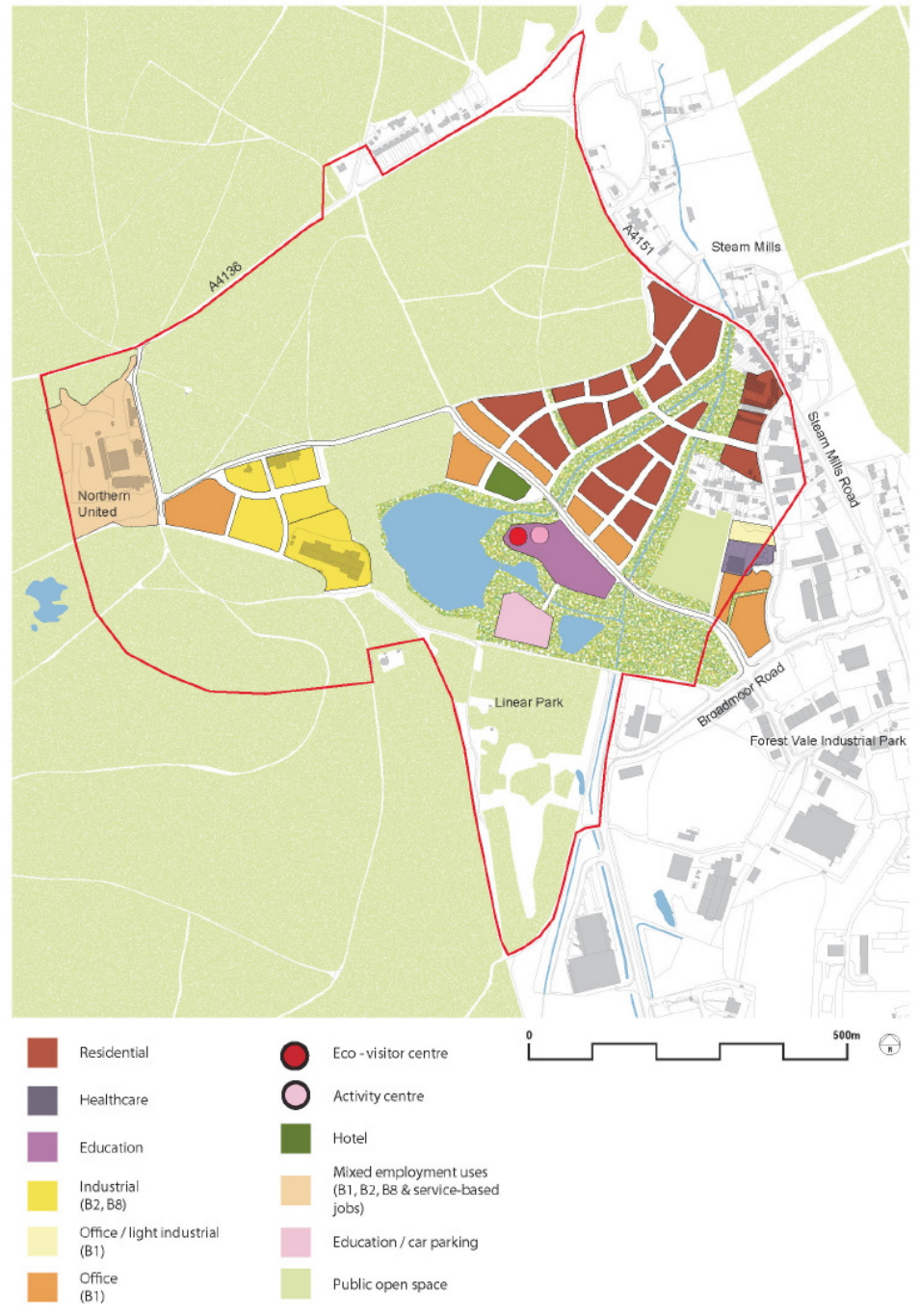
- A new spine road route alignment
- Relocation of the education and skills facility to the South of the spine road, to the east of the lake
- Relocation of the education car park to the south of the lake

Minor changes to the 2009 Preferred Option:

- Increased commitment to preserving minor watercourses on site and increasing riparian buffers to reflect on-site corridors, such as splitting the building occupying revised plots 36 and 37 to avoid developing over one of the minor watercourses on the site
- Commitment to incorporating renewable technologies in all new development (10 houses/1000msq or over), providing at least 20% of the predicted energy requirements
- Enhanced commitment to the protection of biodiversity, water quality and other aspects of sustainability
- Other general AAP Policy and text amendments made in response to consultee comments


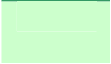
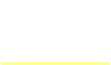



The visualisation of the Pre-Submission Draft AAP Masterplan is replicated in *Figure 4.1* below.

Figure 4.1 The Pre-Submission Draft AAP Masterplan



APPRAISAL SCORING AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT AAP AND MASTERPLAN ASSESSMENT

This Section provides a summary of the key findings of the assessment of the Pre-Submission Draft AAP and Masterplan assessment. It is intended as a brief summary guide only, with the full narrative of the assessment being provided within the main body of the Appraisal Report. The ratings devised to highlight the level of significance of impacts are as follows:

Nature and Scale/severity of Significant Impact	Colour Code	Description
Strong positive		A positive impact which is likely to result in moderate to major benefits.
Positive		A positive impact which is likely to result in minor to moderate benefits.
Neutral		An impact where no change from the current situation is expected.
Uncertain		An impact where there is insufficient information to determine if it will be positive or negative.
Negative		A negative/adverse impact which is likely to result in minor to moderate disbenefits
Strong negative		A negative/adverse impact which is likely to result in moderate to major disbenefits.

The assessment findings are summarised below but the detailed assessment is provided within the SAR:

Environment and Resource Sustainability	
To Protect and Enhance the Physical and Built Environment	
To ensure sensitive integration of the development within the wider Cinderford area to maximise sustainability for the town and its surrounding area	Positive
To ensure the development does not involve building in areas at risk of flooding or contribute to flooding elsewhere To protect and enhance water resources within and surrounding Cinderford To improve the current low flow situation in Cinderford Brook and in doing so improve water quality and biodiversity To investigate opportunities to further reduce existing flood risk within Cinderford	Positive
To promote sustainable procurement of both materials and personnel through construction and operation of the development To reduce the carbon footprint of the development, and its wider area, through design, delivery and operation	Positive
To develop new residential building to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 (by 2010 and increasing with Government policy thereafter); non residential Buildings to achieve at least BREEAM excellent or relevant equivalent.	Positive

To integrate sustainable waste management facilities and services within the development, to the benefit of it and Cinderford more broadly	
To support the improvement of contaminated and derelict land and reduce the impact of unstable land To ensure contaminated and derelict land is restored and returned to beneficial use. To reduce the potential of pollution incidents impacting on land, through implementing and monitoring the use of best practice environmental management techniques.	Positive
To protect and enhance air quality	Uncertain
To encourage the use of renewable energy where appropriate	Positive
Designated and Non-Designated Ecological Sites: Biodiversity	
To protect and enhance designated and non-designated sites within and adjacent to the development, and across Cinderford	Negative
To ensure that the development contributes to the protection of the wider wildlife interest of the district, especially strengthening of links between 'wild' areas to better enable adaptation to climate change	Negative
To Promote More Sustainable Forms of Transport Provision	
To promote sustainable access into and out of the area	Positive
To promote more sustainable patterns of travel and modes of transport, such as the use of public transport, walking and cycling To enhance sustainable transport infrastructure	Positive
To help reduce the need to travel, such as by ensuring that people can live closer to their work and by improving local access to services	Positive
To promote economic patterns that avoid unnecessary dependence on long-distance trade and travel	Uncertain
To reduce the distance to, and/or ease of accessing, schools, shops, places of work and recreation	Positive
Economic Sustainability	
To promote/help facilitate economic sustainability within the area	Strong Positive
To enhance infrastructure and services, to support local businesses To promote sustainable business practice within Cinderford To enhance the attractiveness of Cinderford as a place for business investment	Strong Positive
To diversify the range of employment opportunities within Cinderford To enhance access to employment and up-skilling opportunities To promote integration of educational and skills training in line with identified need	Strong Positive
To help increase the number of people who stay/visit the area To promote sustainable tourism initiatives in the Forest of Dean (such as walking/cycling tourism)	Strong Positive
Social Sustainability	
To Promote Sustainability Skills and Learning	
To promote and facilitate awareness raising and understanding of sustainability	Positive
To promote access to education and vocational skills training	Strong Positive
To Promote Social Integration	

To promote social connectivity between and across communities in Cinderford and the wider area	Positive
To promote civic and wider stakeholder engagement amongst the population of Cinderford and surrounding area	Positive
To enhance the health and wellbeing of residents and workers within Cinderford	Positive
To enhance access to social, leisure and sporting facilities in and surrounding Cinderford, including the Forest, for all	Positive
To Promote Equality of Opportunity	
To meet identified housing need, in particular, the provision of affordable housing	Positive
To promote equality of opportunity and access for all within Cinderford To ensure physical and social access to infrastructure, services and opportunities	Positive
To Protect and Enhance the Historical and Cultural Identity of the Area	
To protect and enhance local identity and heritage within and across Cinderford	Positive
To ensure that the social and cultural heritage of the area is maintained through development works	Positive
To support the protection of culturally and historically significant assets and qualities. Not just designated sites and buildings, but also locally valued features and landmarks	Neutral

4.3

TEMPORAL IMPACTS

Many projected significant impacts are unlikely to be fully felt until the AAP is being fully implemented. Impacts will typically not be fully demonstrable, therefore, within the immediate to short-term timeframes but will become increasingly evident as, for example, infrastructure, services and community engagement start to be realised.

The first, short to medium-term, benefits of the AAP will be realised when construction begins, with visible enhancement of the area and economic sustainability benefits of local construction employment and procurement of goods and services. However, a number of the benefits identified in this assessment will only be realised in the longer term, such as the socio-economic benefits associated with use of the education facility, permanent employment opportunities and improved connectivity within Cinderford.

The full benefit of the AAP will also be dependent upon delivery of the implementation measures discussed in *Section 5* of this NTS, including the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures.

Integrated delivery of the AAP and Masterplan for the Northern Quarter with other local and national plans and strategies has the potential to give rise to significant positive cumulative impacts. The AAP and Masterplan forms part of a suite of documents which comprise the Forest of Dean District Council Core Strategy (including the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy) and collectively these documents will seek to deliver upon the objectives of the Core Strategy Objectives. The AAP, along with the other Core Strategy documents, will seek to align with and contribute to the sustainability aims for the wider area – in particular as set out in the Sustainable Community Plan for the Forest of Dean 2008-2020 and Gloucestershire’s Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-17.

It is also recognised that the AAP for the Cinderford Northern Quarter will have cumulative impacts alongside other Area Action Plans emerging from the areas surrounding the Northern Quarter – in particular, the Lydney Area Action Plan – noting that this document is in the early stages of drafting at present and cumulative impacts cannot be definitively identified at this time. Significant benefit can accrue in terms of economic and social sustainability, through the regeneration of the area, facilitated by the collective suite of AAPs. This should provide a stimulus to the economic development of the area, inward investment and potentially inward migration of residents and visitors.

It will be important to ensure consistency of approach and objective across the Forest of Dean area. A collective strategic approach will be critical to delivering beneficial impacts which affect the wider area, notably improved public transport provision as well as wider objectives for driving improvement in areas such as housing, education, skills and welfare.

The scale of benefit which can accrue through the cumulative impact of the AAP with other local and wider plans can be further heightened by ongoing engagement and collaboration with local stakeholders, to ensure that local businesses, for example, have the opportunity to maximise the potential which such regeneration will bring. The next Section explores key considerations for enhancing positive impacts and the cumulative beneficial impact of delivering the AAP as a whole.

To inform future implementation of the AAP and Masterplan, it is noted that the following data gaps were identified during the assessment:

- **Ecological Survey Data**
Surveys were undertaken in 2008, however limited surveys have been undertaken since. Further surveys are planned for 2011 (notably in regard

to the Lesser Horseshoe Bat population at Northern United), however this information is not yet available to inform this assessment.

- **Air Quality Modelling**

Since the detailed design has not yet determined, it is not yet possible to obtain detailed air emissions and noise modelling data. Such modelling will be undertaken at a detailed design stage, however this assessment is necessarily qualitative.

- **Transport Modelling**

While a Transport Assessment for the AAP was produced in 2009 and updated in 2011, this assessment did not include an assessment of sustainable transport use under different AAP options, or a prediction of how the overall number of journeys into and out of the Cinderford area will change as a result of the AAP. Therefore, impacts relating to these aspects remain an area of uncertainty within the assessment.

Beyond these data gaps, no other significant difficulties have been encountered during the assessment.

4.6

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The AAP sets out a positive and progressive framework for regeneration within the Northern Quarter and Cinderford. It addresses key social and economic needs within the area, through the provision of necessary infrastructure to allow regeneration to occur. Education, housing and commercial needs have been prioritised, whilst recognising the environmental value of the area and the need to retain the identity of Cinderford with its close proximity and links to the Forest of Dean. The proposed development has firmly recognised the importance of local character and context, the Masterplan accommodates the known conditions of the Northern Quarter and the socio-cultural issues which the Council is conscious of the need to address, such as enhancing connectivity, accessibility and engagement. It is essential that the positive platform of engagement which characterised the development process to date, is continued.

With regard to environmental sustainability, the AAP and Masterplan should facilitate sensitive integration of future development, within the existing physical environment and townscape. In conjunction with other Core Strategy documents and the other local and regional sustainability policies described in *Chapter 4* of the Appraisal Report, it is important that there is an ongoing consideration of how best to ensure key habitats and species such as bats, are fully protected. Engagement with Natural England, the Environment Agency and local environmental stakeholders, provides a mechanism to ensure this occurs.

While it is recognised that there are a number of outstanding areas to be considered during the outline planning stage, the AAP represents a positive

commitment by the Forest of Dean District Council to progressing sustainability within the Cinderford area and a genuine platform for stimulating development in a sensitive and sustainable manner. Mitigation and enhancement can be provided through the implementation of the AAP and Masterplan in line with the recommendations outlined in the next Chapter, and at the outline planning stage.

In conjunction with identifying the likely significant effects on the environment, the SEA Directive and Regulations also require the identification of measures to prevent, offset or reduce any significant adverse effects that are anticipated to arise.

5.1

EMBEDDED MITIGATION

The primary mechanism through which mitigation has been addressed, is through the process of iterative development of the AAP and Masterplan in conjunction with stakeholder and the multidisciplinary client and consultant team. The objective has been to ensure that mitigation is incorporated in a timely and effective manner in order to avoid negative effects as far as is practicable. This is the key means by which an Appraisal can add value, through guiding the development of the AAP and its policy interventions, maximising the sustainability of its impacts. The principal means by which this has occurred, are as follows:

- Open public consultation on Preliminary Options to capture public opinion on what the proposed AAP and Masterplan should encapsulate;
- Reflecting diversification of land use in line with identified need e.g. educational facility and refining on basis of ongoing feedback;
- Iterating and refining on basis of ongoing environmental assessment of constraints and embedding mitigation in the form of green corridors to offset loss of biodiversity elsewhere;
- Specifically changing Masterplan to reflect ongoing flood risk assessment;
- Seeking to integrate the highest sustainability standards of housing and incorporation of renewables in the form of the Energy Centre;
- Incorporating progressive environmental education/awareness raising initiatives, in the form of the Eco Visitor Centre;
- Seeking to address known local issues surrounding the need for enhanced connectivity and reducing severance wherever possible; and
- Refinement of the 2009 Preferred Option to address key consultation feedback and other external factors relating to the road alignment, location of the educational facility and car park and other, more minor, aspects of the AAP and Masterplan.

The AAP's high level nature provides the context and direction of development in Cinderford Northern Quarter. The detailed measures necessary to deliver the policies within the AAP will be developed through ongoing Masterplanning and in the design of individual projects seeking

planning permission. The following Section identifies recommendations for enhancement and further mitigation.

5.2 *FURTHER MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES*

The following table outlines key factors and considerations to guide implementation of the AAP and Masterplan, with the aim of maximising the beneficial impacts identified in previous analysis and any unrealised potential and as well as mitigating against any negative impacts. A summary of issues raised and accompanying recommendations under the respective strands of sustainability, is presented in *Chapter 8* of the Appraisal Report, in terms of the following topics:

Key Issues and Considerations

<p>Overarching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliverability• Community engagement <p>Environmental Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental management• Site assessment• Protected habitats and species• Reducing flood risk• Sustainable management of the Forest• Protecting the Gloucester Way• The Energy Centre <p>Social Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education• Eco-visitor and activity centre• CSH & Integrating Building Level Technologies• Sustainable Travel and Transport• Equalities <p>Economic Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrated strategic delivery• Assessment of the property market• Northern United area• Wider development of industrial land• Sustainable procurement

5.3 *MONITORING DELIVERY OF THE AAP*

The Forest of Dean District Council will seek to work with key stakeholders to monitor sustainability performance of the AAP. The box below details the range of indicators which it is suggested should be used to monitor performance of the AAP during its lifetime.

Some of the indicators are those which have been identified within the Sustainability Appraisal for the FODDC Core Strategy, which will be monitored at the District level. Further indicators have also been included, to reflect the full range of sustainability issues relating to the AAP, and which

form part of the publically available neighbourhood statistics. The suggested indicators are set out below.

Sustainable Development Indicators

Environmental indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mode of travel to school • Main method of travel to work • Condition of SSSI's that form the Bat SAC • Population of 4 BAP Butterfly Species • Countryside quality counts indicator • Percentage of properties at 1% risk of flooding • Installed low carbon energy projects • Area of contaminated land • Brownfield landuse/Greenfield protection • Water usage by postcode • Percentage of main rivers achieving good status in 2015 • Groundwater quality • Applications submitted with a Waste Minimisation Strategy
Economic indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality (from monitoring areas in the district) • Earnings / house price affordability ratio • Out commuting • Average income • Percentage of workforce with no academic / vocational or professional qualifications • Productivity • Business investment • Employment and economic inactivity • Access to local services • Household income and child poverty • Poverty in retirement • Households living in fuel poverty
Social indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average Life Expectancy • Percentage of people describing their health as not good • Provision of 'affordable' housing units • Number of listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments • Crime and fear of crime • Educational attainment • Access to healthcare services • Mortality rates • Smoking • Childhood obesity • Road accidents • Housing conditions • Homelessness • Wellbeing

The selection of indicators reflects those aspects of AAP delivery which can be qualitatively and/or quantitatively monitored to assess the success of AAP delivery, noting that it is not necessary to attempt to capture all aspects of benefit but instead focus on those primary areas where there is the potential to effect most impact, and benefit.

Copies of the Pre-submission Draft AAP and Masterplan and the updated Sustainability Appraisal, are available to view online at the council website www.fdean.gov.uk. All documents are available on CD / paper on request from the Forest of Dean Forward Planning section on telephone 01594 812335, 812325 or 812326. Alternatively, please email wendy.jackson@fdean.gov.uk.

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