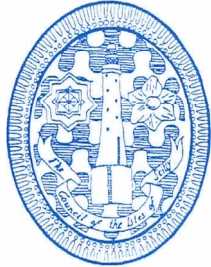


**Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of
the Isles of Scilly Local Development Framework**



SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

Supplementary Planning Document

**DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR A NEW SCHOOL BASE ON ST
MARY'S**

July 2008

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Most of the Council documents referred to in the Sustainability Assessment can be viewed at www.scilly.gov.uk

1. Non-Technical Summary

This Non Technical Summary sets out the key issues arising from the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the development brief for a new school base on St Mary's. The purpose of a SA is to promote sustainable development by integrating sustainability considerations into the preparation of plans and documents. Consequently, this SA appraise the key environmental, economic and social effects of the development brief that has been prepared to guide the development of the site at Carn Gwaval, St Mary's for a new secondary, primary and nursery school. The SA also identifies recommended revisions to the brief to ensure that the development as proposed makes a more positive contribution to sustainability. This SA has been revised following a consultation period.

Key Sustainability Issues

The SA has illustrated that the development brief for a new school base on St Mary's will make a positive contribution to sustainability as summarised below:

1. A relatively sustainable location in close proximity to the largest settlements on St Mary's (Old Town & Hugh Town), with good access and connection to existing footpath network;
2. The site is relatively well-screened and secluded although the scale of the proposal will mean that it will lead to the loss of countryside and impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Conservation Area and Heritage Coast, although the extent of the impact will be dependent on the detailed siting and design.
3. There are no direct threats to any listed buildings or scheduled monuments. However, some form of archaeological mitigation would be required, especially as much of the land at Carn Gwaval is anciently enclosed farmland;
4. The development would provide a new school and the opportunity of reforming and redesigning the pattern of education and schools infrastructure to best serve the community of the islands' for decades to come;
5. The design, layout and landscaping of the scheme as proposed in the development brief takes account of the environmental sensitivity of the islands and the sites geographical and topographical features to ensure it is appropriate to its context and to minimise any environmental harm; and
6. The development would include elements of sustainable design to mitigate any impact on essential infrastructure and CO₂ emissions through sensitive siting and the incorporation of micro renewable energy, energy efficiency, water harvesting and conservation measures, as well as initiatives to reduce car usage and encourage more environmentally and healthy travel options;
7. In addition to the positive benefits, the SA identifies amendments to the draft development brief that would improve its contribution to meeting sustainability

objectives, including a clearer statement about the need to incorporate sustainability measures.

2. Sustainability Appraisal

2.1 Sustainability Appraisal Procedure

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is required by section 19(5a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to ensure compliance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC). This SA has been prepared in the context of the guidance published by the ODPM in November 2005 and entitled Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents.

2.2 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

The SA Framework provides a means of identifying and analysing the key sustainability effects of the development brief. The SA therefore identifies a broad range of Sustainability Objectives covering environmental, economic and social issues. These objectives have been formulated to reflect the policies and priorities set out in the Isles of Scilly Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Plan and the AONB Management Plan. All these documents have been subject to extensive consultation with the community and key stakeholders in accordance with the principles set out in the Statement of Community Involvement. In view of this level of consultation relative to the size of the islands and the nature and scale of the proposal as set out in the development brief, no consultation has been undertaken on the scope of this SA. The range of objectives and the lack of specific targets reflect the nature and scale of the proposed development set out in the brief.

2.3 Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

Environmental

- 1 Protect and enhance the landscape character of the AONB and Heritage Coast;
- 2 Preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- 3 Minimise consumption of natural resources;
- 4 Retain and enhance cultural heritage and local distinctiveness;
- 5 Protect and enhance biodiversity;
- 6 Reduce the need and opportunity for travel by unsustainable means.

Economic

- 7 Modernise and diversify the local economy.

Social

- 8 Provide quality services to meet the needs of the community;
- 9 Promote physical health and mental well-being;

- 10 Improve accessibility;
- 11 Promote a stronger community.

2.4 The Purpose of the Development Brief and the Options

The purpose of the development brief is to provide a detailed spatial planning framework to guide the development of a new school on St Mary's in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. The development brief identifies the main requirements, together with the opportunities and constraints, to ensure that the new school meets the highest educational, environmental and sustainable standards possible.

This development brief supplements the policies and proposals contained in the adopted Local Plan – A 2020 Vision, including Policy 6 (Infrastructure for Sustainable Communities) and Proposal C (Sports and Recreation Facilities, St Mary's). Proposal C specifically identifies land in the vicinity of the school at Carn Gwaval for sports and recreation, including the development of a sports hall, multiple use games area, playing field, skate-park and children's play area.

Various potential sites have been analysed to identify the most suitable and sustainable site to accommodate the new school. Based on an analysis of a range of potential sites, land adjacent to the existing primary base at Carn Gwaval has been considered the most appropriate and suitable site to accommodate the new St Mary's school base. This strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis is attached to the initial SA prepared for the draft development brief but is not attached to this revised SA.

2.5 Environmental, Economic and Social Baseline Characteristics

The baseline information to identify the social, economic and environmental characteristics used to predict the likely affects of the development brief is set out in the Annual Monitoring Report published in December 2007 and a range of documentation including the following:

- The Sustainable Community Strategy;
- The Local Plan – A 2020 Vision;
- The AONB Management Plan;
- The Isles of Scilly Design Guide;
- The Isles of Scilly – A Landscape Assessment of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- The Isles of Scilly Natural Area Profile;
- Report on Traditional Farm Buildings on the Isles of Scilly

The characteristics of the site itself as well as its surrounding are described in detail in the draft Development Brief.

In addition to the baseline information described above, a raft of national and regional plans and documents has also set the context for this SA including the following:

Regional Planning Documents

Regional Planning Guidance for the South West
Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West

National Planning Documents

The European Directive 'Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna & Flora (Dir 92/43/EC)

The UK's Shared Framework for Sustainable Development (One Future Different Paths) and Securing the Future, Delivering the UK Sustainable Development Strategy (Cm 6467)

Sustainable communities: Building for the future

Living places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener.

Sustainable Communities in the South West

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning

Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable energy

2.6 The Effects of the Development Brief against the Sustainability Objectives

To determine the impact on implementing the development brief against the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives, a number of issues have been taken into account including the temporary or permanent nature of the effect, the likelihood of it occurring, its scale and cumulative impact. Symbols have been used in the SA for recording the significance of the effects as described below:

✓✓ Significant Positive Impact

X Negative Impact

✓ Positive Impact

XX Significant Negative Impact

- No or Neutral Effect

? Uncertain

Environmental

1. Protect and enhance the landscape character of the AONB and Heritage Coast

SA Score	Comments
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X	The encroachment of this relatively large scale development onto a green-field site into the countryside would have a visual impact on the landscape. However, dependent on the detailed design, siting and scale of the new school, due to topography and landscaping in the area, it is considered that the visual impact would generally be localised and relatively well contained although it would be visible from the lower moors area and from the higher land in the east, including from parts of the coast path, the approach road into Old Town and from the airport. Mitigation to be provided by detailed design, careful siting and sensitive landscaping and retention of topographical landscape and other features as set out in the development brief.
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2. Preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

SA Score	Comments
X	The encroachment of this relatively large-scale development onto a green-field site into the countryside would have a visual impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Mitigation to be provided by detailed design, careful siting and sensitive landscaping as set out in the development brief. The design principles established in the development brief reflect innovative and high quality design principles in accordance with Policies 1 and 2 of the Local Plan and based on the Isles of Scilly Design Guide and the guidelines laid down by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.

3. Minimise consumption of natural resources

SA Score	Comments
X?	The overall consumption of natural resources is difficult to predict. Nevertheless, the construction process will use significant natural

	<p>resources. However, the consumption of natural resources will be minimised by careful siting and orientation to maximise solar gain (including naturally daylight and ventilated classrooms) and cater for climate conditions and through the incorporation of sustainable design measures including micro-renewable energy, energy efficiency and water harvesting and conservation and the provision of appropriate facilities to encourage the re-use and recycling of materials including composting.</p> <p>The draft brief specifies that the planning application should be accompanied by a Sustainability Assessment set by BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) Schools Methodology with the aim of achieving at least a “very good” rating.</p> <p>The draft brief specifies that use should be made of locally sourced, renewable or recycled materials from sustainable sources and low-embodied energy products where appropriate.</p> <p>The brief specifies the inclusion of a Travel Plan as part of the development of the new school with the aim of encouraging alternative travel arrangements to the motor car, which would reduce consumption of fossil fuels.</p>
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4. Retain and enhance cultural heritage and local distinctiveness

SA Score	Comments
X	<p>The design principles established in the development brief reflect innovative and high quality design principles in accordance with Policies 1 and 2 of the Local Plan and based on the Isles of Scilly Design Guide and the guidelines laid down by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment on locally distinctive architecture appropriate to its rural setting and has regard to the contents of the Design Guide.</p>

	<p>The draft development brief specifies that an archaeological assessment and evaluation will be required to assess, evaluate and record any remains prior to the commencement of development in consideration of unknown archaeological sites, given that much of the site and surrounding area is anciently enclosed farmland and the proximity of scheduled monuments and the Lower Moors water logged palynological deposits.</p>
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5. Protect and enhance biodiversity

SA Score	Comments
X	<p>The development brief specifies that measures will be required to protect and enhance nature conservation interests, including protected species. Such measures are especially important in relation to the change of use of the low-lying meadows to playing fields and which are located directly south of the Lower Moors Special Site of Scientific Interest.</p> <p>The development brief specifies that a comprehensive landscaping scheme should be provided, including strategic planting to reduce any visual impact from the wider area, particularly from views along the coast and the Lower Moors. The brief specifies that the landscaping scheme should incorporate native trees and shrubs indigenous to the area, retain existing hedges and trees and conserve any existing wildlife features where appropriate, and include measures to enhance biodiversity.</p>

6. Reduce the need and opportunity for travel by unsustainable means

SA Score	Comments
✓	The site is situated in a relatively sustainable

	<p>location in close proximity to both Old Town and Hugh Town, the two largest settlements on St Mary's with good access to existing pedestrian routes.</p> <p>The brief specifies the inclusion of a Travel Plan as part of the development of the new school with the aim of encouraging alternative travel arrangements to the motor car.</p>

Economic

7. Develop and diversify the local economy

SA Score	Comments
✓	<p>Difficult to predict as uncertain whether or not there would be any net increase in the number and quality of jobs associated with the new school. However the construction of the school would provide employment opportunities for local builders, which should be encouraged as part of any building contract. The incorporation of sustainable technology will provide opportunities to develop electrical and plumbing skills in the installation and maintenance of such measures.</p>

Social

8. Provide quality services to meet the needs of the community

SA Score	Comments
✓✓	<p>The provision of a new school provides an opportunity to reform and redesign the pattern of education and the schools infrastructure to best serve the community for decades to come.</p> <p>The brief makes it clear that good community access will be a pre-requisite for the new school</p>

	base providing facilities for community education and distance learning. The school facilities should be accessible to the wider community including those relating to sports and ICT.
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9. Promote physical health and mental well-being

SA Score	Comments
✓✓	<p>The brief makes it clear that good community access will be a pre-requisite for the new school base providing facilities for community education and distance learning. The school facilities should be accessible to the wider community including those relating to sports and ICT. It is considered that the provision of these community facilities will help the physical health and mental well-being of the community.</p> <p>The brief also emphasises that physical barriers should not preclude wheelchair users and the partially-ambulant from enjoying access throughout the new school, including students, teaching and other staff. It also incorporates the principles of inclusive design so that the new school is accessible to, and usable by, people with the widest range of abilities within the widest range of situations, including those with additional needs, without the need for special adaptation or design. The brief also specifies that dedicated areas within the school should exist for withdrawal and privacy.</p>

10. Improve accessibility

SA Score	Comments
✓✓	The brief provides consideration for those with a mobility or sensory impairment to ensure the proposed development is accessible to all of the community. The brief emphasises that physical barriers should not preclude wheelchair users and the partially-ambulant from enjoying access

	<p>throughout the new school, including students, teaching and other staff Incorporate the principles of inclusive design so that the new school is accessible to, and usable by, people with the widest range of abilities within the widest range of situations, including those with additional needs, without the need for special adaptation or design.</p> <p>The site is situated in a relatively sustainable location in close proximity to both Old Town and Hugh Town, the two largest settlements on St Mary's with good access to existing pedestrian routes.</p> <p>The brief specifies the inclusion of a Travel Plan as part of the development of the new school with the aim of encouraging alternative travel arrangements to the motor car.</p>
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11. Promote a stronger community

SA Score	Comments
✓✓	<p>The brief makes it clear that good community access will be a pre-requisite for the new school base providing facilities for community education and distance learning. The school facilities should be accessible to the wider community including those relating to sports and ICT.</p> <p>The design considerations for those with a mobility or sensory impairment will ensure that the proposed development is accessible to all in the community.</p>

2.6 Recommended Revisions to the Development Brief following the Sustainability Appraisal and Public Consultation

The development brief is considered to comprehensively deal with all the main sustainability issues in the development of the site with a new school. However,

the consultation process has raised the issue as to whether or not the site boundary for the new school base should be amended to include the existing school site at Carn Gwaval. The main issues in considering whether or not to incorporate the existing primary school site at Carn Gwaval include a potential reduction in the impact on the environment against the increase in the construction period and cost of the project, the disruption to students, increased flood risk and the loss of the opportunity to reuse the existing buildings. Having regard to all the issues as summarised, it is considered that on balance the difficulties and additional costs of incorporating the existing site as part of the development of the new school do not outweigh any of the advantages identified. Consequently, it is recommended that the existing site is not included as part of the development of the new school.

3. The Next Stages

3.1 Sustainability Appraisal Consultation

The consultation on the sustainability appraisal ran alongside the consultation on the draft development brief between April and May 2008 in accordance with Regulation 17. The findings of the SA and all consultation responses on the draft development brief have been considered with amendments made to the SA.

3.2 Monitoring

To ensure the development brief delivers the sustainability benefits and mitigation measures as identified in the SA, it will be necessary to monitor its implementation. Whilst some impacts can be easily measured and reported, other issues are more complex as previously referred to in the SA. The most pragmatic and effective method for monitoring and reporting the implementation of the development brief will be through the Annual Monitoring Report.

