

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

Sustainability Appraisal Report

October 2012

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SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF KNOWSLEY'S LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

1. NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Report outlines the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council's Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document.
- 1.1.2 SA is a systematic process used to assess the extent to which a plan or strategy will help to achieve relevant social, environmental and economic objectives. It also suggests ways of avoiding or reducing negative impacts.
- 1.1.3 This SA considers the potential implications of the Core Strategy by assessing the Spatial Strategy, Principal Regeneration Areas and Thematic Policies against available baseline data and sustainability objectives. The findings of SA should be reflected in the Core Strategy to help ensure that it maximises its contribution to future sustainability.
- 1.1.4 This Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken on the pre-consultation version of the proposed submission document of the Local Plan: Core Strategy. The consultation version has been amended after taking into consideration the recommendations of this report.

1.2 Requirement to Undertake a Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.2.1 Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning the planning system. In order to ensure that new plans and strategies contribute towards sustainable development, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the requirement for a SA to be carried out on all new or revised Local Plans (formerly known as Local Development Frameworks). Whilst the Localism Act 2011 and the recent publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) have resulted in a number of significant changes to the planning system, there is a continued requirement for Local Plan documents to be subject to SA throughout their preparation.
- 1.2.2 In addition, local planning authorities must comply with European Union Directive 2001/42/EC, which requires a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of plans and programmes that are likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

1.2.3 While SA and SEA are distinct processes many of their requirements overlap. This report has been produced to meet the requirements of both. Throughout this report, all references to SA should be taken to include the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC.

1.3 Sustainability Objectives

1.3.1 The SA considers the potential implications of the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document by assessing the plan against a series of social, environmental and economic objectives. Accordingly, the establishment of these objectives is central to the SA process.

1.3.2 Drawing upon the sustainability issues identified through analysis of baseline data and the review of other relevant plans and strategies, twenty-two objectives that reflect Knowsley's priorities for achieving a sustainable borough have been identified in the SA Scoping Report¹. These cover a range of issues, for example relating to housing, social deprivation, health, crime, climate change, biodiversity, air quality, water quality, landscape, cultural heritage, business competitiveness, educational attainment and unemployment. In addition, thirty-seven sub-objectives have been identified to assist with the assessment against the sustainability objectives. Notwithstanding the changes that have taken place to the planning system since the publication of the SA Scoping Report, it is considered that the SA objectives and sub-objectives identified in the Scoping Report are still relevant to Knowsley and provide a suitable framework for this SA.

1.4 Baseline Characteristics and Key Sustainability Issues

1.4.1 The review of plans, programmes and strategies, the analysis of the baseline data, and consultation with the public and statutory bodies enabled the following key sustainability issues to be identified for the borough:

- Over the past 25 years the population of Knowsley has decreased markedly;
- Knowsley is among the most deprived districts in England;
- There is a need to increase the proportion of households that are owner-occupied and reduce the number of homes that do not have access to modern amenities;
- Over half of persons in Knowsley aged 16 to 74 have no qualifications;
- Binge drinking, smoking and obesity are particular problems in Knowsley;

¹ Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Knowsley Council, 2009)

- There is a need to reduce the need to travel by car and increase the use of more sustainable forms of transport;
- Economic activity rates and incomes are lower than the North West average;
- There is a need to retain a greater proportion of retail expenditure within Knowsley to enhance the vitality and viability of the Borough's town centres;
- 2 of the 15 conservation areas in Knowsley are included on the latest Heritage at Risk register;
- Access to areas of natural and semi-natural open space is poor in parts of the Borough;
- There is a need to conserve and enhance the natural environment recognising the importance of biodiversity;
- There is a need to secure and promote increased energy efficiency and renewable energy sources;
- There is a need to promote and secure more sustainable waste management;
- There is a need to consider the impacts of flooding and flood risk;
- The biological and chemical condition of rivers needs to be improved; and
- The re-use of land should be promoted to minimise the take-up of greenfield land.

Source: Sustainability issues were derived from the baseline data gathered in 2008 – 2009 to inform the SA Scoping Report (May 2009).

1.5 Appraisal Results: Positive and Negative Effects

1.5.1 The SA process concluded that the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document has the potential to deliver a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits. A number of recommendations were however made about how individual preferred options could perform better against the sustainability objectives. In addition, there were several instances where it was recommended that further information be provided on the effects of the options in order to provide greater certainty about their impact on the SA objectives.

Approach to Sustainable Development

1.5.2 The policy on Sustainable Development would have a positive effect on a significant proportion of the objectives. In particular, the policy's commitment that planning applications will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to the provision of housing; increasing the number of new businesses; maintaining high and stable levels of employment; and reducing poverty and social deprivation. The aim to secure development that improves environmental and social conditions

should also ensure that policy has a positive impact on a wide range of indicators. There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

Spatial Strategy

1.5.3 The Spatial Strategy for Knowsley (CS1) and Development Principles (CS2) are considered to be likely to have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. In particular, it is envisaged that the Development Principles are likely to have a major positive impact in the long-term on the objectives relating to health; mitigating climate change; and reducing the need to travel. It was concluded that the policies for Housing Supply (CS3), the Economy and Employment (CS4) and Town Centres and Retail (CS6) would have a positive impact on a range of objectives, particularly those that relate to social and economic issues and it is predicted that the policy for Green Infrastructure (CS8) would have a positive impact on a range of objectives, particularly those relating to landscape character and accessibility; biodiversity; adapting to climate change; and green infrastructure.

1.5.3 It was however considered that a number of the policies would have an uncertain or negative impact on some of the objectives. For instance, a number of the policies, such as the Spatial Strategy (CS1) and Green Belt (CS5) would however have an uncertain impact on a number of environmental objectives in the longer term due to the potential for it to result in the release of a number of sites in the Green Belt.

Principal Regeneration Areas

1.5.4 The policies for each of Principal Regeneration Areas would have a positive impact on a range of sustainability objectives, particularly those relating to social issues. The policies relating to Kirkby town centre (CS10), Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks (CS11), South Prescott (CS13) and Prescott town centre (CS14) would also have a major positive impact on at least one of the economic objectives.

1.5.5 Nevertheless, as each of the policies would result in built development and would therefore lead to some carbon emissions associated with the construction and operation of this development, their impact on the objective relating to mitigating climate change is uncertain. There is also some uncertainty over the impact of the policy for Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks (CS11) on the objectives relating to air quality and need to travel, particularly as there is limited information available on the amount and nature of the new employment uses that would be delivered. In addition, due to both policies resulting in the provision of B1 office development in an out of centre location, the impact of the policies for Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks (CS11) and South Prescott (CS13) on the objective relating to the

vitality and viability of Knowsley's town centres is considered to be uncertain.

Thematic Policies

- 1.5.6 On the whole, the Thematic Policies performed well in the SA process. In particular, the policies relating to housing and the accommodation needs of the community (CS 15 – CS18) would all have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; health and the provision of good quality housing. The policies relating to Sustainable and Low Carbon development (CS22) and Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure (CS23) would have a major positive impact on the objective relating to mitigating climate change. The policy for Greenspaces and Trees (CS21) would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to landscapes; biodiversity; adapting to climate change; and green infrastructure.

1.6 Difference the Sustainability Appraisal Process has Made

- 1.6.1 The SA process concluded that the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document has the potential to deliver a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits. However, it also identified some instances where options have the potential to have a negative impact on sustainability objectives, a number of uncertain impacts and a range of opportunities for further enhancements to improve the Core Strategy's sustainability.
- 1.6.2 A number of specific recommendations have also been made to improve the performance of the Core Strategy. Where these have resulted in changes being made to the publication version, they are noted. The recommendations include:

Spatial Strategy

- Clarifying whether Policy CS1 would include investment in health and education service provision;
- Incorporating a reference to maintaining and enhancing Knowsley's local centres in policy CS1 (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation);
- Encourage recruitment targeted towards areas of greatest deprivation in policy CS4;
- Specifying the need to improve linkages between housing and employment areas by public transport, walking and cycling in policy CS4;
- Ensuring that an impact assessment will be applied to larger scale out of centre office development and, if possible, identify a locally defined floorspace threshold at which this test will be applied;

- Ensuring any development on the 'reserve' and 'safeguarded' locations identified by policy CS5 is built to an appropriate density and incorporates appropriate measures to mitigate impacts on biodiversity.

Principal Regeneration Areas

- Ensuring that development delivered through policy CS10 on the land to the south of Cherryfield Drive is effectively integrated into the existing town centre; and
- Providing evidence to demonstrate that the proposed out of centre office development could not be directed to a more sequentially preferable location and would not have an unacceptable impact on Knowsley's town centres.

Thematic Policies

- Amending policy CS19 so that it expects new development to, where possible, enhance features of local importance and historic interest, landscapes and townscapes (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation);
- Amend the wording of policy CS20 so that it prevents demolition/development which would adversely affect the setting of historic assets (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation) and so that it is clear that the policy will, where appropriate, seek to protect and enhance locally important historic assets;
- Amend policy CS23 so that it acknowledges that very special circumstances may exist which could outweigh harm to the Green Belt (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation); and
- Provide a list of the types of applications that would be excluded from the requirement to demonstrate that the proposal would not sterilise mineral resources in a Mineral Safeguarding Area in order to ensure that a proportionate approach is taken to safeguarding mineral resources (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation).

1.7 Next Steps

- 1.7.1 This report is being published for consultation alongside the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document and a number of other supporting studies / assessments. The consultation provides the public, statutory consultees and other stakeholders with an opportunity to express opinions on this report and also to use it as a reference point whilst commenting on other documents included in this stage of consultation.

1.7.2 Any significant changes made to the Proposed Submission version of the Core Strategy will be subjected to further SA. It is envisaged that the Submission version of the Core Strategy will be submitted to the Secretary of State in early 2013.

1.8 How to Comment

1.8.1 This SA Report will be subject to a consultation period alongside the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document. Comments are invited on the contents of the report, in terms of the appraisal methodology, the accuracy of the assessment of the likely significant effects of the plan and the opportunities for additional mitigation to ensure that the Core Strategy is as 'sustainable' as possible. All comments submitted during this period will be considered and, where appropriate, amendments may be made to the SA scoring to reflect the comments received.

1.8.2 Comments can be submitted using the following methods:

- By email, to localplan@knowsley.gov.uk;
- By post, to:
Policy Manager (Places and Neighbourhoods)
Chief Executive's Directorate,
Knowsley Council,
Archway Road
Huyton
Knowsley
Merseyside
L36 9YU.

1.8.3 Further details regarding the consultation, including the deadline for receipt of comments, can be found on the Council's website.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1.1 In September 2004, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act came into effect and introduced the requirement for Knowsley Council to replace its existing land use development plan – the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP)² – with a Local Development Framework (LDF). Whilst the Localism Act and the recent publication of the National Planning Policy Framework have resulted in a number of significant changes to the planning system, there is a continued requirement for Knowsley Council to produce a local spatial plan to replace its existing UDP. However, due to the aforementioned changes to the planning system, this replacement plan will now be referred to as a Local Plan rather than a LDF.
- 2.1.2 Knowsley's Local Plan will comprise a series of individual documents that collectively deal with the spatial issues that will affect the people who will live, learn, work and relax in the Borough. The overarching document of the Knowsley Local Plan will be the "Local Plan: Core Strategy".
- 2.1.3 The Core Strategy will outline the Council's vision for Knowsley up to the year 2028, and will set out the strategic framework to promote, guide and manage future growth and development in the Borough. Accordingly, it will make important choices about how and where new development will take place and establish an appropriate balance between growth, regeneration and environmental protection / improvement. It should be noted that previous consultation on the emerging Core Strategy made provision for development up to 2027. It is now envisaged that the Core Strategy will be adopted in 2013. Therefore the plan period for the publication version of the Core Strategy has been extended to 2028 to account for a 15 year timeframe recommended by national guidance.
- 2.1.4 Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning the planning system and, as a consequence, sustainability will be at the heart of the Core Strategy. In order to ensure that new plans and strategies contribute towards sustainable development, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to be carried out on all new or revised Core Strategies. SA seeks to promote sustainable development through the integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation, adoption and implementation of plans and strategies. It involves the identification and evaluation of the social, environmental and economic impacts of a plan,

² Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (Knowsley Council, 2006)

offers an opportunity to consider ways in which a plan can make an effective contribution to sustainable development and provides a means of avoiding or reducing any adverse effects that the plan might have.

2.2.2 This report outlines the findings of the SA of the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document pre consultation version. This SA considers the potential implications of the Core Strategy by assessing the Spatial Strategy, Principal Regeneration Areas and Thematic Policies against available baseline data and sustainability objectives. The consultation version of the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document has been amended after taking into consideration the recommendations of this report.

2.2.3 This report is being published for consultation alongside the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document and supporting studies / assessments. The consultation provides the public, statutory consultees and other stakeholders with an opportunity to express opinions on this report and also to use it as a reference point whilst commenting on other documents included in this stage of consultation. It should be read together with the previous interim SA reports issued alongside the Core Strategy for consultation.

2.2 Requirement for SA / SEA

2.2.1 Under Section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, where a Local Planning Authority is preparing a Core Strategy it is mandatory for the plan to be subject to SA throughout its production, to ensure that it is fully consistent with, and helps to implement, the principles of sustainable development. The SA performs a key role in providing a sound evidence base for the Core Strategy and provides a means of demonstrating to decision makers, and the public, that the plan is the most appropriate given reasonable alternatives.

2.2.2 In parallel with this, the European Directive 2001/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment” (the Strategic Environmental Assessment or ‘SEA Directive’), which is transposed into United Kingdom law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the ‘SEA Regulations’), introduced a statutory obligation to conduct an environmental assessment of certain plans. The Regulations apply to a range of UK plans and programmes prepared by public bodies, including Knowsley’s Core Strategy which meets the relevant criteria in that:

- It is “prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government, and is required by

legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions” (Article 2(b)); and

- It concerns “town and country planning or land use... which sets the framework for future development consent of projects” (Article 5.2(a)).

2.2.3 While SA and SEA are distinct processes, many of their requirements overlap. As a consequence, the Government has prepared guidance³ which advises that an integrated approach to SA and SEA should be pursued, so that the SA process also meets the requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations. This involves extending the breadth of (predominantly environmental) issues required to be considered under SEA to cover the full range of aspects (including social and economic) for sustainability.

2.2.4 In accordance with this guidance, this SA Report meets the SEA requirements, and acts as the ‘environmental report’ for the purposes of Regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Throughout this report, all references to SA must therefore be taken to include the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC.

2.3 Compliance with these Requirements

2.3.1 As outlined above, the intention of this SA is to adopt an approach to appraisal which also meets the requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations. The following table shows how this report meets the requirements of the SEA Directive.

Table 1: Compliance with the SEA Directive

Information to be included in an Environmental Report under the SEA Regulations	Relevant sections in the SA Report
An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.	3.2 3.4 – 3.6
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan.	3.3
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	3.3
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan, including in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas	3.3 3.8

³ CLG Plan Making Manual (CLG, 2008).

designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.	
The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	3.3 3.5
The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soils, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape, and the interrelationship between the above factors.	4.1 – 4.5 Appendix Report
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan.	4.6 Section 6 Appendix Report
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties.	3.1 3.7
A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	Section 5
A non-technical summary of the information provided above.	Section 1

2.4 History of the SA in Relation to the Core Strategy

Scoping Report

2.4.1 In May 2009 an SA Scoping Report was produced to define the scope of the SA with regard to the Core Strategy, and to define the important features of the baseline that will inform the plan. The aim was to ensure that the SA was comprehensive and would address all relevant issues and objectives, by enabling input from key stakeholders and consultation bodies at an early stage in the process.

2.4.2 In particular, the Scoping Report provided an initial assessment of:

- The relationship between the Core Strategy and other relevant plans and programmes;
- The current environmental, social and economic baseline and any trends; and
- The likely key sustainability issues.

2.4.3 The Report also set out the proposed methodology for the SA, giving details of its level of detail and scope.

2.4.4 Consultation on the SA Scoping Report took place between May and June 2009. Comments were invited from the consultation bodies required by the SEA Regulations – the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England⁴. The main comments from consultation on the SA Scoping Report were the need to:

- Review additional relevant plans, policies and programmes to identify their implications for the Core Strategy;
- Incorporate additional baseline information on the historic environment, landscape, geodiversity, recreation, rural green space and green infrastructure;
- Identify any sustainability issues for the historic environment and cultural heritage, conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, geodiversity and geological conservation, local landscape and townscape quality and character, public enjoyment of the countryside and green infrastructure; and
- Incorporate additional references to the Biodiversity Duty and the North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan.

2.4.6 The SA Scoping report has been updated to address these comments.

Issues and Options Report

2.4.7 The SA of the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report⁵ was consulted upon between November 2009 and January 2010.

2.4.8 As part of the consultation, the Issues and Options Report presented three distinct Strategic Spatial Options for the development of Knowsley, together with a range of thematic options. The three Strategic Spatial Options were:

- **Option A – "Urban Concentration"** – this option would focus investment in commercial, economic and housing development, services and infrastructure within Knowsley's existing urban areas with no urban expansion into Green Belt areas. It was however recognised that the limited availability of sites for new development within the urban area could result in the borough's housing and employment lands not being met or alternatively could lead to a reliance on neighbouring districts to meet these development needs.
- **Option B – "Focused Urban Regeneration"** – this option would also focus development primarily into the current urban area.

⁴ The SEA Regulations require the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England and the Countryside Agency to be consulted on the scope of sustainability appraisals. However, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act merged the Countryside Agency and English Nature to form a new agency - Natural England.

⁵ Knowsley Core Strategy Issues and Options Report (Knowsley Council, 2009)

Compared to Option A, it would, however, place greater emphasis on focusing new development into locations which are either within or easily accessible from the Borough's most deprived neighbourhoods, or which require regeneration. There would be a more active approach to remodelling and redeveloping key regeneration areas than is the case with Option A. In common with Option A, there would be no urban expansion into Green Belt areas. However, as with Option A, this option is likely to result in the borough's development requirements either not being met or being transferred to neighbouring authorities.

- **Option C – "Sustainable Urban Extensions"** – this option would initially also focus development within the current urban areas. For the later years of the plan period however (unlike Options A and B) it acknowledged that there may be a need to enlarge the urban area into areas currently defined as Green Belt to meet the Borough's development needs. No locations for expansion into Green Belt areas were identified at this stage as further work was needed to identify these. The Issues and Options Report did however list a number of criteria that would be considered to identify broad locations for release of Green Belt.

2.4.9 Further information about each of these options, including their advantages and disadvantages, is provided in Chapter 6 of the Issues and Options Report.

2.4.10 The Core Strategy Issues and Options Interim SA Report found that each of the three Strategic Spatial Options had the potential to deliver a range of social, environmental and economic benefits, but also that each would have a range of negative effects. In particular, it concluded that Option A would protect the character of the rural landscape and countryside, restore land quality and have a positive impact, albeit a short term one, on the vitality and viability of Knowsley's town centres, reducing the need to travel, economic inclusion and access to goods and services. The interim SA Report however concluded that Option A was likely to result in the loss of urban greenspaces and could thereby have an adverse effect on Green Infrastructure; adaptation to climate change; health; air quality; and also potentially biodiversity and water quality. It was also considered that the option could have a long-term negative impact on reducing the need to travel, air quality and mitigating climate change.

2.4.11 The interim SA Report considered that Option B would have a major positive impact on educational attainment and, by focusing development on areas of greatest need, would also have a positive effect on economic inclusion and access to goods and services. It however concluded that this option would have similar negative effects to those identified for Option A.

2.4.12 In relation to Option C, the Interim SA considered that this option would have an especially strong impact on the supply of high quality housing and on exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses. Nevertheless, the SA also identified that this option could have a major negative impact on protecting the local character of the landscape and countryside and also have an adverse effect on air quality; climate change and the vitality and viability of Knowsley's town centres.

2.4.13 Comments were received on the Issues and Options Interim SA Report from Natural England. The main comments were:

- Overall, the SA report was considered to be clearly presented and easy to use. The inclusion of a concise non-technical summary at the beginning of the report was commended and the report was considered to be well structured throughout;
- The confirmation that the Habitats Regulations Assessment will be undertaken separately from the SA/SEA process was welcomed;
- The inclusion of a SA objective concerning local character and accessibility of the landscape was welcomed – however it was commented that consideration of the local townscape could be incorporated into this objective;
- The inclusion of objectives regarding biodiversity, habitats and geodiversity and green infrastructure was also welcomed;
- Generally the findings of the SA were supported but it was considered that more references to the baseline information and specific sensitive receptors that may be affected by particular options (e.g. particular communities, nature conservation sites, heritage assets, etc) could be included. Although it was recognised that this may not be possible until subsequent stages in the SA; and
- The range of indicators for monitoring the objectives relating to the natural environment was supported. However, it was suggested that the list of indicators for objective E2⁶ be amended to focus more on monitoring the quality of habitats and designated sites, rather than simply their presence.

2.4.14 These comments were taken into account when undertaking subsequent SA of the emerging Core Strategy. In particular, additional references to the baseline information and specific sensitive receptors have been incorporated into the appraisals.

⁶ Objective E2 seeks to protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of protected and endangered species, habitats, geodiversity and sites of geological importance. All of the SA objectives and their sub-objectives are presented in section 3.4 of this report.

2.4.15 In addition, to the Issues and Options Interim SA Report produced by Urban Vision, an in-house sustainability appraisal of the thematic policies contained within the Issues and Options report was undertaken by the Council.

Preferred Options Report

2.4.16 The SA of the Core Strategy Preferred Options report was consulted upon between June and September 2011.

2.4.17 The Preferred Options report set out a Preferred Spatial Strategy for Knowsley which was a combination of Option B "Focused Urban Regeneration" and (for longer term needs) Option C "Sustainable Urban Extensions". The selection of this Preferred Spatial Strategy was based upon the conclusions of the Issues and Options Interim SA Report, the comments received during the consultation on the Issues and Options Paper and the findings of available evidence, particularly on the capacity of the existing urban area to accommodate Knowsley's development requirements during the entire plan period. In particular, the Issues and Options Interim SA Report highlighted that both Option B and Option A would have a positive impact on a range of sustainability objectives. Specifically, it highlighted that Option B would have a major positive impact on educational attainment and, by focusing development on areas of greatest need, would also have a positive effect on economic inclusion and access to goods and services. The Issues and Options Interim SA Report identified that Option C would have an especially strong impact on the supply of high quality housing and on exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses.

2.4.18 The preferred option report set out that this preferred Spatial Strategy was considered to represent the best approach to reconcile competing priorities for development of the Borough, whilst ensuring that the vision for Knowsley could be delivered up to 2027. The approach was also considered to support the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and reflected priorities set by national policy, including planning for housing and employment growth, supporting urban regeneration, maintaining a hierarchy of centres and promoting environmental sustainability. The Core Strategy Preferred Options report provided detail of the range of 'alternatives' that were considered by the Council but subsequently discounted during the process of identifying a preferred Spatial Strategy.

2.4.19 The SA of the preferred Spatial Strategy for Knowsley considered that it would have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. In particular, it was considered that the preferred Spatial Strategy has the potential to have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and social deprivation; improving access to goods, services and amenities; improving health and reducing health inequalities; and

improving educational attainment. The emphasis placed upon re-balancing the housing stock by providing a wide choice of new market sector and affordable housing should ensure that the Spatial Strategy has a positive impact on the objective relating to the provision of good quality housing. The SA did however identify a number of mitigation measures to increase the level of certainty that the preferred Spatial Strategy would have a positive impact on a range of environmental objectives. These mitigation measures included:

- Incorporating 'the managing and enhancing of Knowsley's heritage assets' as a Spatial Development Priority in preferred option CS1;
- Specifying the need to improve linkages between housing and employment areas by public transport, walking and cycling in preferred option CS4;
- Strengthening the wording of preferred option CS4 to require proposals for town centre uses in out of centre locations to demonstrate that there are no sites in a town centre or edge of centre location that are suitable, available and viable;
- Ensuring new development is built to an appropriate density to minimise the need to release additional Green Belt sites; and
- Incorporating a direct reference to protected and endangered species in preferred option CS8.

2.4.20 The SA of the Core Strategy Preferred Options also undertook an appraisal of the preferred approach to Principal Regeneration Areas and Thematic Policies. This SA concluded that the preferred options for each of Principal Regeneration Areas would have a positive impact on a range of sustainability objectives, particularly those relating to social issues. Nevertheless, it also identified the potential for each of the preferred options to have an uncertain impact on the objective relating to mitigating climate change. A number of recommendations were made to improve the performance of the Principal Regeneration Areas and Thematic Policies against the SA objectives. These mitigation measures included:

- Including proposals to improve access to training in the preferred option for Kirkby town centre (CS10);
- Strengthening the wording of the preferred option for Prescot town centre (CS14) in relation to the provision of a range of services and facilities.
- Providing more information on why the proposed 25% affordable housing contribution is a 'realistic and appropriate' figure;
- Requiring specialist and supported residential accommodation to be located near to public transport links;
- Including the impact of the proposal on the accessibility of the landscape as an issue that would be taken into account when

considering the suitability of sites for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople;

- Incorporating a reference to preserving and enhancing archaeological assets in the preferred option on Managing the Borough's Heritage (CS20);
- Incorporating a requirement for proposals for the recycling of aggregates to comply with the criteria in the Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD;
- Ensuring proposals for minerals working are required to retain existing local access routes or amend them to maintain a similar level of access; and
- Providing more information on the effects of infrastructure contributions on the viability of development.

2.4.21 Comments were received on the Preferred Options SA Report from the Environment Agency. The main comments were:

- The Interim Sustainability Appraisal refers to key sustainability issues to be identified, including the biological and chemical condition of rivers needing to be improved.
- There are very few references to rivers in context of their potential value to Knowsley e.g. green infrastructure, recreation and wildlife.
- Important waters (that are also Water Framework Directive water bodies) in this area include the River Alt, Croxteth/Knowsley Brook and Simonswood Brook, Ditton Brook, Dog Clog Brook, Mill Brook and Prescott (Logwood) Brook. No mention is made of the need to improve any of these waters. However, Local Authorities have a duty to "have regard" to the Water Framework Directive. All of the surface waters currently fail the Water Framework Directive and they are some of the worst quality waters in the North West (and the country). However, this makes it even more important that opportunities are sought wherever possible to improve the water environment.

2.4.22 These comments were taken into account when undertaking the SA of the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document.

2.4.23 A separate SA has also been undertaken of the broad locations in the Green Belt being considered for development by the emerging Knowsley Core Strategy. This includes an appraisal of those identified as Tier One and Tier Two "reserve locations" as well as those identified as "safeguarded locations". In order to ensure that there has been a suitable appraisal of all reasonable options, this SA also provides an appraisal of those locations that were discounted at the final stage of the draft Knowsley Green Belt Study. A number of alternative locations have also been proposed by landowners/developers during the

consultation on the draft Knowsley Green Belt Study and the Core Strategy Preferred Options report. This report also outlines the findings of the SA of these alternative locations. The SA of the broad locations in the Green Belt is being published for consultation alongside this SA Report⁷.

2.4.24 Details of how the Sustainability Appraisal process has influenced the Core Strategy can be found in the Council's Accounting for Assessments document⁸.

⁷ Knowsley Core Strategy: Green Belt Broad Locations for Development Sustainability Appraisal Report (Urban Vision, June 2012).

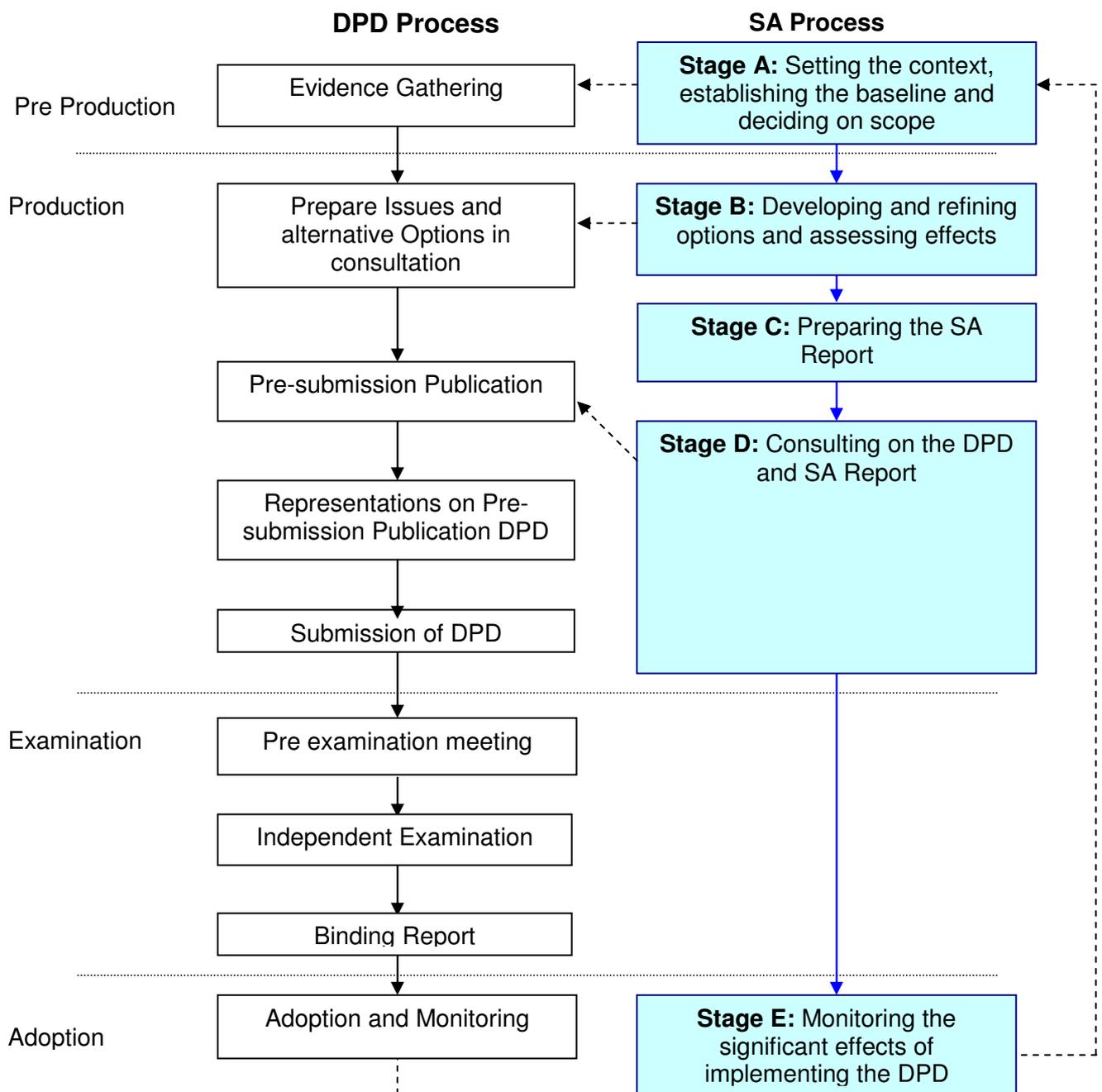
⁸ Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy Accounting for Assessments (Knowsley MBC, 2012)

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overall Approach

3.1.1 The approach adopted to undertake the SA was based on the process set out in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Guidance Paper “Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents” November 2005 and its successor guidance provided by the CLG Plan Making Manual. This guidance advocates the following process to undertaking SA:

Figure 1: DPD and SA preparation process



- 3.1.2 There are five stages in the SA process. Knowsley Council undertook the first stage (Stage A), identifying the initial scope of the SA, in May 2009. In conjunction with key stakeholders, the Council identified and reviewed other relevant plans, policies and programmes that will affect and influence the Core Strategy; set out relevant social, environmental and economic baseline information; identified the key sustainability issues for the SA to address; established an SA Framework consisting of sustainability objectives, indicators and targets; and produced a Scoping Report for consultation on the scope of the appraisal.
- 3.1.3 As part of Stage A of the SA process, twenty-two sustainable development objectives were established for appraising the Core Strategy. The establishment of SA objectives and criteria is central to the SA process. The SA framework, based on these objectives provides a way in which sustainability effects are described, assessed and compared. Sustainability objectives are distinct from the objectives of the Core Strategy.
- 3.1.4 The sustainability objectives used for the appraisal of the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy were drawn from the sustainability issues identified through the analysis of the baseline data and review of other plans and strategies set out in the SA Scoping Report. These objectives reflect Knowsley's priorities for achieving a sustainable borough and cover a range of issues, for example relating to housing, social deprivation, health, crime, climate change, biodiversity, air quality, water quality, landscape, cultural heritage, business growth, educational attainment and unemployment. In addition, thirty-seven sub-objectives have been identified to assist with the assessment against the sustainability objectives.
- 3.1.5 The appraisal of each of the Core Strategy policies against the SA framework has drawn upon a review of a wide range of evidence base documents.
- 3.1.6 The SA Framework can be found in the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Appendices report.

3.2 Links to Other Plans, Programmes and Strategies

- 3.2.1 Stage A of the SA process involves establishing the context in which the Core Strategy is being prepared, namely the other plans, programmes and strategies that influence its content (and vice-versa) and the opportunities and challenges they present. The SEA Directive specifically requires environmental objectives established at international, European Community or national levels to be taken into account in developing the Core Strategy. However, in order to facilitate a comprehensive approach and maximise its sustainability, guidance

on SA recommends that this should be widened to consider how the Core Strategy can support the full range of other plans, policies and programmes that already exist, including at the regional, sub-regional and local levels, taking into account their economic and social as well as environmental objectives.

3.2.2 In reviewing these plans, policies and programmes the aim is to identify their implications for the Core Strategy to ensure that the relationship between these documents and the Core Strategy has been fully explored. This will in turn ensure that Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council is able to exploit potential synergies and address any identified inconsistencies between international, national, regional and local objectives.

3.2.3 Table 2 below shows a list of the plans, policies and programmes that were reviewed as part of the SA. The full review is provided in the SA Scoping Report for the Core Strategy (2009), which is available on the Council's website.

Table 2: List of all Plans, Programmes and Strategies reviewed as part of the SA Scope

INTERNATIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, 1992 • Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice: The Sixth Environment Action Programme of the European Community, 2002 • Sustainable Development Strategy EU, May 2001 • European Council Directive 2000/60/EC- Integrated river basin management for Europe • European Council Directive 75/442/EEC on waste • Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC • European Landscape Convention • European Spatial Development Perspective
NATIONAL ⁹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981 • Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) • Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 • The Conservation (Natural Habitats & C.) Regulations, 2004 • Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 • Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 • The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future, 2001 • Heritage Protection for the 21st Century, a joint England and Wales White Paper • Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review and Toolkit for their Implementation, 2003 • By All Reasonable Means: Inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people, 2005. • Circular 01/06 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites • Sustainable Communities Plan, building for the Future, 2003 • Biodiversity Strategy for England, 2002 • Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty, 2007 • Biodiversity by Design, 2004

⁹ It is recognised that there have been a number of significant changes to the national Plans, Programmes and Strategies since the original review of these was undertaken. In particular, the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework has resulted in the withdrawal of the majority of Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance notes. It is however considered that these changes are unlikely to result in changes to the SA Framework.

- The Code for Sustainable Homes
- Green Infrastructure Guidance, 2009
- Climate Change and Biodiversity Adaptation: the role of the spatial planning system, 2009
- Heritage Works: The use of historic buildings in regeneration
- Securing The Future: delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005.
- The Countryside in and around Towns – a Vision for Connecting Town and Country in Pursuit of Sustainable Development
- PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Communities
- PPS 1 (Supplement) Planning and Climate Change
- PPG 2 Green Belts
- PPS 3 Housing
- Draft PPS 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development
- PPS 6 Planning for Town Centres
- PPS 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice
- PPS 10 Planning for Sustainable Waste Management
- PPS 12 Local Spatial Planning
- PPG 13 Transport.
- PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment
- PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning
- PPG 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- PPS 22 Renewable Energy
- PPS 23 Planning and Pollution Control
- PPG 24 Planning and Noise
- PPS 25 Development and Flood Risk

REGIONAL

- North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021
- North West Plan Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review 2008 - 2009
- North West Regional Housing Strategy, 2005
- Action for Sustainability – The Regional Sustainable Development Framework for the North West, 2004
- Investment for Health - Action plan for the North West.
- The North West Plan for Sport and Physical Activity, 2004-2008.
- The Green Infrastructure Guide for the North West
- Rising to the Challenge – A Climate Change Action Plan for England's North West
- Countryside Character Volume 2: North West
- North West Regional Biodiversity Targets
- Streets for All

MERSEYSIDE

- Second Local Transport Plan for Merseyside 2006 – 2011, 2006
- Merseyside "New Heartlands" Housing Market Renewal Initiative 2003
- North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan
- Merseyside Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, MWDA, 2005
- Merseyside Joint Waste Development Plan Document
- Action Plan for the City Region 2002-2005, Mersey Partnership, 2001
- Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy, The Mersey Partnership, 2007
- Merseyside Heritage Investment Strategy, Culture North West, 2005
- Towards a Green Infrastructure Framework for the Liverpool City Region: Draft Discussion Document, 2009

LOCAL

- Knowsley the Borough of Choice: Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2023
- Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006
- Ensuring Choice of Travel SPD (Draft)
- Greenspace Standards and New Development SPD
- Householder Development SPD
- North Huyton SPD
- Tower Hill (Kirkby) SPD
- Knowsley Annual Monitoring Reports

- Knowsley MBC Corporate Plan
- Knowsley MBC Housing Strategy
- Knowsley MBC Economic Development Plan
- Knowsley Economic Regeneration Strategy (currently being prepared)
- Knowsley MBC Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005-2008
- Knowsley MBC Building Schools for the Future programme
- Knowsley Guide to Development
- Conservation Area Character Appraisal for each of the 15 conservation areas.
- An Environmental Policy for Knowsley Council
- Knowsley Council's Climate Change Strategy 2008 - 2009

3.3 Baseline Characteristics and Key Sustainability Issues

3.3.1 The collection and analysis of baseline information is a key component of the SA process and a legal requirement under the SEA Directive. It facilitates the identification of the key sustainability issues that need to be taken into account when developing a plan and assists in the formation of objectives, indicators and targets for the plan. Baseline data also provides the information necessary to assist in predicting and monitoring the effects of a plan.

3.3.2 For the Core Strategy, baseline data was obtained from a number of different sources. The analysis of the key baseline characteristics for Knowsley, together with an assessment of other relevant plans, policies and programmes, has facilitated the identification of the key sustainability issues that need to be taken into account when developing the Core Strategy.

3.3.3 From this analysis it is evident that Knowsley is one of the most deprived districts in England, with significant problems in parts of the Borough in relation to unemployment, health, educational attainment and fear of crime. Nevertheless, it is recognised that Knowsley also contains a number of valuable assets that must be protected and enhanced. The major social, environmental and economic issues for Knowsley are identified below:

- Over the past 25 years the population of Knowsley has decreased markedly;
- Knowsley is among the most deprived districts in England;
- Knowsley currently has an unbalanced mix of housing. There is a need to increase the proportion of households that are owner-occupied and reduce the number of homes that do not have access to modern amenities;
- Over half of persons in Knowsley aged 16 to 74 have no qualifications. Accordingly, there is a need to improve educational attainment and increase access to training and opportunities for lifelong learning;

- A significant proportion of Knowsley's population experience serious health issues, with binge drinking, smoking and obesity being particular problems;
- Fear of crime is a significant issue;
- There is a need to reduce the need to travel by car and increase the use of more sustainable forms of transport;
- Economic activity rates and incomes are lower than the North West average and need to be improved;
- There is a need to retain a greater proportion of expenditure within Knowsley to enhance the vitality and viability of the Borough's town and local centres;
- 2 of the 15 conservation areas in Knowsley are included on the latest Heritage at Risk register;
- Access to areas of natural and semi-natural open space is often poor;
- The quality of the built environment in parts of the Borough is poor;
- There is a need to conserve and enhance the natural environment recognising the importance of biodiversity;
- There is a need to secure and promote increased energy efficiency and renewable energy sources;
- There is a need to promote and secure more sustainable waste management;
- There is a need to consider the impacts of flooding and flood risk;
- The biological and chemical condition of rivers in the Borough need to be improved; and
- The re-use of land should be promoted to minimise the take-up of greenfield land.

Source: Sustainability issues were derived from the baseline data gathered in 2008 – 2009 to inform the SA Scoping Report (May 2009).

3.4 Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

3.4.1 The SA appraises the potential implications of the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document from a social, environmental and economic perspective. The SA is fundamentally based on an objectives-led approach whereby the potential impacts of a plan are gauged in relation to a series of objectives for sustainable development. The establishment of these objectives is therefore central to the SA process as it provides the methodological yardstick against which the sustainability effects of the Core Strategy can be described, assessed and compared.

3.4.2 Drawing upon the sustainability issues identified through analysis of baseline data and the review of other relevant plans and strategies, the

SA Scoping Report for the Core Strategy identifies twenty-two objectives that reflect Knowsley's priorities for achieving a sustainable borough. In addition, a number of sub-objectives have been identified for each objective to assist with the assessment against them. These objectives and their sub-objectives are listed below.

3.4.3 The objectives have been designed to be fully comprehensive, whilst minimising any overlap between individual objectives that could potentially cause confusion and skew the results of any appraisal. Each objective is inevitably broad in its scope given the wide-ranging nature of the Core Strategy and its potential sustainability implications.

SOCIAL

S1 To reduce poverty and social deprivation and secure economic inclusion.

- Improve the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation rating of the Borough.
- Reduce the proportion of children living in poverty.
- Reduce the percentage of lower level Super Output Areas that are in the top 10% most deprived in England.
- Improve health and reduce long-term limiting illness.
- Improve rates of economic activity.

S2 To improve local accessibility of goods, services and amenities and reduce community severance.

- Improve community facilities.

S3 To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime.

- Improve road safety.
- To reduce crime and fear of crime.

S4 To support voluntary and community networks, assist social inclusion and ensure community involvement in decision making.

S5 To improve health and reduce health inequalities.

- Increase life expectancy.
- Reduce mortality rates.
- Reduce levels of obesity.

S6 To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.

- Provide a wider choice of accommodation to create a greater tenure mix.
- Increase the quality of housing by improving housing amenities.
- Minimise resource and energy use when developing housing and the energy efficiency of housing.

- S7 To improve educational attainment, training and opportunities for lifelong learning and employability.**
- Increase educational achievement.
- S8 To preserve, enhance and manage Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings, areas, sites and features.**

ENVIRONMENTAL

- E1 To protect, enhance and manage the local character and accessibility of the landscape and countryside across Knowsley.**
- Provide the required amount of open space.
 - Provide open space in accessible locations.
 - Improve the quality of open space.
 - Improve the cleanliness of open areas.
 - Increase number of parks with green flag award.
- E2 To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of protected and endangered species, habitats, geodiversity and sites of geological importance.**
- To conserve and enhance the natural environment, including species and habitat diversity.
- E3 To adapt to climate change including flood risk.**
- Reduce flood risk
- E4 To mitigate climate change including using energy prudently and efficiently and increasing energy generated from renewable sources.**
- Reduce CO2 emissions.
- E5 To provide, conserve, maintain and enhance green infrastructure.**
- To improve the size and quality of the green infrastructure network.
 - To improve the size and quality of the Ecological Framework.
- E6 To protect, manage and restore land and soil quality.**
- Reduce the amount of derelict land.
 - Direct new housing to previously developed land.
 - Reduce the amount of contaminated land.
- E7 To protect, improve and where necessary, restore the quality of inland, and estuarine waters.**
- Increase the length of rivers in 'Good' or 'Fair' biological condition.
 - Increase the length of rivers in 'Good' or 'Fair' chemical condition.
- E8 To protect, and where necessary, improve local air quality.**

E9 To use water and mineral resources prudently and efficiently.

E10 To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of more sustainable transport modes.

- Encourage sustainable transport use.

E11 To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.

ECONOMIC

EC1 To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business, exploit the growth potential of business sectors and increase the number of new businesses.

- Increase number of local and new businesses.
- Increase industrial / commercial floorspace.

EC2 To enhance the vitality and viability of town and local centres.

- Increase the vitality of shopping areas.
- Improve community facilities.

EC3 Maintain high and stable levels of employment and reduce long-term unemployment.

- Reduce unemployment

3.5 Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy

3.5.1 The Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document seeks to achieve the following Strategic Objectives by 2028:

Table 3: Core Strategy Strategic Objectives

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE NO.	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
1	Sustainable Economic and Employment Growth: To encourage and maintain sustainable economic and employment growth in Knowsley, complementary to that within the wider Liverpool City Region, by accommodating employment related development, improving skills within the workforce, and promoting enterprise, entrepreneurship and innovation.
2	Well-Balanced Housing Market: To promote a well-balanced housing market throughout Knowsley by providing a sufficient quantity and mix of high quality sustainable housing in appropriate locations to meet needs and demand (including for market, affordable and supported housing).
3	Regenerate and Transform: To regenerate and transform areas of social and economic deprivation so they become more sustainable, safer, healthier and more cohesive communities, hence narrowing the gap between the richest and poorest communities in Knowsley.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE NO.	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
4	Distinctive, Viable and Sustainable Town Centres: To promote distinctive, viable and sustainable town centres in Huyton, Kirkby and Prescot, by improving choice, variety and quality in their range of retail, leisure and other town centre uses, together with thriving district centres, including enhancements of those in Halewood and Stockbridge Village, and a more sustainable pattern of local centres.
5	Quality of Place: To promote the quality of place within Knowsley by protecting historically important features and enhancing the character, quality and diversity of Knowsley's built environment, including town centres, key employment areas, residential neighbourhoods, green spaces, conservation areas, rural areas and villages, key gateways and transport routes.
6	Sustainable Transport: To ensure new development in Knowsley encourages a reduction in the overall need to travel, and prioritises sustainable transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. This will help to ensure accessibility and linkage between housing areas and employment locations, shopping, leisure, culture, health care, education, community and sporting facilities, green spaces and other services.
7	Manage Environmental Resources: To manage environmental resources in Knowsley prudently by focusing on sustainable development, recycling and renewable technologies, minimising pollution, reducing carbon emissions and responding to the impacts of climate change.
8	Green Infrastructure and Rural Areas: To support and strengthen the role of Knowsley's Green Infrastructure (in rural and urban areas), promote biodiversity, and maintain the character of rural settlements including Cronton, Tarbock and Knowsley Village.
9	Promoting Health and Wellbeing in Knowsley: To address existing health inequalities and encourage enhancements to the health and wellbeing of Knowsley's residents by ensuring a health promoting environment and provision of healthy lifestyle options for those living and working in the Borough.

3.6 Testing the Core Strategy Objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

3.6.1 In order to ensure that the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy are consistent with the principles of sustainable development they must be tested against the SA framework. This enables conflicts and tensions between the objectives to be identified and recommendations made for their amendment or identify additions to them.

3.6.2 Table 5 'tests' the Core Strategies objectives against each of the SA objectives.

Summary SA Objective	Reduce poverty	Improve local access to goods & services	Improve safety & reduce crime	Support voluntary & community networks	Improve health	Good housing	Education & training opportunities	Preserve built heritage	Protect & enhance countryside & landscape	Protect & enhance biodiversity	Adapt to climate change	Mitigate climate change	Preserve green infrastructure	Restore land & soil; quality	Protect & improve water quality	Protect & improve air quality	Use resources efficiently	Reduce need to travel & use more sustainable modes	Minimise waste & increase recycling	Business growth	Vitality & viability of town centres	High & stable levels of employment
SA Objective	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	EC1	EC2	EC3
Summary Core Strategy Objective																						
Encourage sustainable economic and employment growth	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	+	+	+
To create a well-balanced housing market	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	?	?	0	?	0	?	0	0	0	?	0	+	+	0
Regenerate and transform areas of social and economic deprivation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	+
Promote distinctive, viable and sustainable town centres	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	+	+	+
Promote the quality of place within Knowsley	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	?	0	?	0	+	+	0
Ensure new development reduces the need to travel and prioritises sustainable transport links	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	+	+

Summary SA Objective	Reduce poverty	Improve local access to goods & services	Improve safety & reduce crime	Support voluntary & community networks	Improve health	Good housing	Education & training opportunities	Preserve built heritage	Protect & enhance countryside & landscape	Protect & enhance biodiversity	Adapt to climate change	Mitigate climate change	Preserve green infrastructure	Restore land & soil; quality	Protect & improve water quality	Protect & improve air quality	Use resources efficiently	Reduce need to travel & use more sustainable modes	Minimise waste & increase recycling	Business growth	Vitality & viability of town centres	High & stable levels of employment
SA Objective	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	EC1	EC2	EC3
Summary Core Strategy Objective																						
Manage environmental resources prudently and respond to the impacts of climate change	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	0
Support and strengthen the role of Knowsley's Green Infrastructure	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Address health inequalities and encourage enhancements to health and well-being	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Objectives are compatible



Objectives are not compatible



Uncertain relationship



No direct relationship

3.6.3 Overall the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy are considered to be compatible with the SA objectives. In particular, the objectives concerning the regeneration of areas of social and economic deprivation; promoting distinctive, viable and sustainable town centres; managing environmental resources prudently; ensuring new development reduces the need to travel and prioritises sustainable transport links, are especially consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

3.6.4 There were no instances where the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy were incompatible with a SA objective. Nevertheless, there were some uncertain relationships between the two sets of objectives.

3.7 Data Limitations/Technical Difficulties

3.7.1 The SEA Directive requires the identification of any difficulties encountered; these may include technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge. There were no significant technical difficulties encountered during the SA of the Local Plan Core Strategy: Proposed Submission Document. However, there were some areas of uncertainty (partly resulting from the strategic nature of the document) and evidence constraints particularly in terms of quantifying impacts. It is however acknowledged that it would not be reasonable to expect all of this information to be available at this stage in the planning process.

3.7.2 Some of the key limitations/difficulties at the time of undertaking the assessment included:

- Limited information is presented on the quantum of development that is likely to come forward in some of the Principal Regeneration Areas;
- Difficulty in assessing whether the increase in carbon emissions arising from the built development proposed by some of the policies would be outweighed by the mitigation measures built into the policy;
- The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment identifies wider areas of the borough that may be at risk from groundwater flooding but there is a lack of available local-level information in relation to this risk;
- Limited information available over the impact on Knowsley's town centres from directing B1 office development to certain out of centre locations; and
- Limited information about some of the proposals for the Principal Regeneration Areas due to the strategic nature of the document.

3.8 Screening for Habitats Regulation Assessment

- 3.8.1 Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna – the ‘Habitats Directive’ – provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 6 of this Directive introduced the requirement to undertake a ‘Habitats Regulations Assessment’ of the implications of proposed land use plans for the integrity of nature conservation sites of European importance. Such sites are known as Natura 2000 sites, and include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs), Special Areas of Protection (SPAs), potential Special Areas of Protection (pSPAs), Ramsar sites and Offshore Marine Sites (OMSs).
- 3.8.2 The purpose of a Habitats Regulations Assessment is to determine whether or not significant effects on European sites are likely and to suggest ways in which they could be avoided. Under the provisions of the Habitats Directive, consent can only be granted for such a plan if, as a result of the Habitats Regulations Assessment, it can be demonstrated that the integrity of the sites will not be adversely affected or, where adverse impacts are anticipated, there is shown to be no alternative solutions and imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to go ahead.
- 3.8.3 Consultants URS have been appointed by Knowsley Borough Council to assist in undertaking a Habitat Regulations Assessment of the potential effects of the Core Strategy on the Natura 2000 network and Ramsar sites. This Habitats Regulations Assessment will investigate the potential impacts of the plan – in combination with other plans and projects – on relevant European sites (including sites beyond the Knowsley area). This Habitats Regulation Assessment is being conducted alongside, but separate from, the SA.

4. LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY APPRAISAL

- 4.0.1 This section provides a summary of the results of the sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document. The approach to Sustainable Development, the Spatial Strategy, Principal Regeneration Areas and Thematic Policies were each appraised against the twenty-two sustainability objectives and their associated sub-objectives.
- 4.0.2 This appraisal considered the degree and type of impact, split by short term (0-5 years), medium term (5-10 years), and long-term (10+ years). It also predicted the certainty of impact (in terms of high, medium and low); the scale of impact (which ranged from local to national); the permanence of the impact; any key secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic impacts; and options for mitigation.
- 4.0.3 When undertaking this appraisal the default level of certainty was considered to be medium. When it was considered that the impact of a policy on a particular objective was uncertain it was attributed a low level of certainty. Where the appraisal considered that a policy could have a negative impact on a sustainability objective it sought to identify potential measures that could help mitigate its impact. Measures were also suggested if it was considered that there were potential ways of enhancing an already positive impact.
- 4.0.4 A summary of the SA of each aspect of the Core Strategy is presented below. The full sustainability appraisal matrices are available in the Sustainability Appraisal Report Appendices which accompany this report.

4.1 Summary of the Significant Effects of the Approach to Sustainable Development

- 4.1.1 The policy on Sustainable Development would have a positive effect on a significant proportion of the objectives. The policy sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and states that the Council will work pro-actively with applicants to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. The need to secure development that improves environmental conditions in Knowsley should ensure that the policy has a positive effect on the objectives relating to built heritage; landscape character; biodiversity; adapting to climate change; Green Infrastructure; protecting land and soil; and water quality. The need to secure development that improves social conditions in Knowsley should ensure that the policy has a positive effect on the objectives relating to community severance; crime and fear of crime; health; and educational attainment.

- 4.1.2 The support for development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area could support efforts to reduce reliance on private vehicles and increase the use of more sustainable modes of transport given that this could improve economic, social and environmental conditions by reducing impact of high fuel costs on the economy, increasing social mobility and helping reduce the impact of vehicle emissions on air quality and climate change. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a positive effect on the objective of mitigating climate change; protecting air quality; and improving the choice and use of more sustainable transport modes.
- 4.1.3 The policy states that planning applications will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policy could therefore encourage investment in the Borough and stimulate employment opportunities by providing increased assurances that sustainable developments that contribute to the economic conditions of an area will be supported. It is therefore considered that the policy could have a positive effect on the objectives relating to the provision of housing; increasing the number of new businesses; maintaining high and stable levels of employment; and reducing poverty and social deprivation.
- 4.1.4 There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

4.2 Summary of the Significant Effects of the Spatial Strategy

- 4.2.1 In order to achieve the Vision and Strategic Objectives for Knowsley the Local Plan: Core Strategy sets out a Spatial Strategy which provides the overarching strategy on which the remainder of the report is based. This Spatial Strategy is supported by a series of other underlying spatial policies which are fundamental to the delivery of the Core Strategy. The following section gives a brief summary of the outcomes of the SA of the Spatial Strategy for Knowsley and the accompanying spatial policies.

CS1: Spatial Strategy for Knowsley

- 4.2.2 The Spatial Strategy for Knowsley would have a largely positive effect on the sustainability objectives. By seeking to regenerate existing residential neighbourhoods and through appropriate investment in services and facilities, it is considered that the Spatial Strategy has the potential to have a positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and social deprivation; improving access to goods, services and amenities; and improving health and reducing health inequalities. The emphasis placed upon re-balancing the housing stock by providing a wide choice of new market sector and affordable housing should

ensure that the Spatial Strategy also has a positive effect on the objective relating to the provision of good quality housing.

4.2.3 By seeking to enhance existing employment areas, provide a range of sites and premises for new employment development and maintain and enhance the Borough's town and district centres, it is considered that the Spatial Strategy would have a positive effect on the economic objectives. It is however considered that there would be greater certainty that the Spatial Strategy would have a positive effect on the objective relating to the vitality and viability of the Borough's town and local centres if a reference was included to maintaining and enhancing the Borough's local centres (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation). The Spatial Strategy also seeks to maintain and enhance the Borough's heritage assets, Green Infrastructure network and areas of environmental importance. It is therefore considered that it would have a positive effect, particularly in the short and medium term, on the objectives relating to built heritage; landscape; biodiversity and geodiversity; adapting to climate change; mitigating climate change; Green Infrastructure; land and soil; air quality; and reducing the need to travel. Nevertheless, by allowing for some development in the Green Belt in the longer term, the impact of the Spatial Strategy on a number of these objectives is less certain in the longer term. Ensuring that any new development built within the Green Belt is accessible by a choice of means of transport and is built to an appropriate density to minimise loss of countryside are likely to be key mitigation measures.

4.2.4 There are no anticipated negative effects on the sustainability objectives. The effect of the Spatial Strategy on the objective of improving educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning and employability is however considered to be uncertain due to it being unclear whether the proposed investment in service provision would include enhancements to existing education services or the provision of new facilities for training.

CS2: Development Principles

4.2.5 The policy would have a positive effect on a wide range of social, environmental and economic objectives. By encouraging development that tackles deprivation by, amongst other things, reducing health inequalities and providing opportunities for positive lifestyle choices and health improvement, the policy would have a major positive effect on the objective relating to health. Reducing carbon emissions is listed as a key development principle and the policy states that new development will be supported where it contributes to reductions in carbon dioxide from all sources. The development principles also seek to reduce the need to travel and achieve a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport by promoting the use of public transport, walking and cycling. It is therefore considered that the policy

has the potential to also have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and reducing the need to travel; and some positive effect on the objective of protecting air quality.

- 4.2.6 The emphasis placed upon encouraging development that promotes sustainable economic development, tackles deprivation and helps reduce economic inequality should ensure that the policy has a positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; improving the competitiveness and productivity of business; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment. The development principles also seek to ensure the provision of a range of services and facilities which should have a positive effect on the objectives relating to the accessibility of goods, services and amenities; and improving educational attainment. In addition, the inclusion of development principles relating to the protection of environmental assets and the quality of places ensures that the policy should have a positive effect on the objectives relating to Knowsley's built heritage; landscape character and accessibility; biodiversity and geodiversity; land and soil; and water quality.
- 4.2.7 The development principles encourage new development that makes the most efficient use of available resources by promoting efficiency in resource use, including the reuse and recycling of materials. Accordingly, it is considered that the policy should have a positive effect on the objectives of using water and mineral resources prudently and minimising the production of waste. The development principles seek to support Green Infrastructure and the greening of towns and cities. They also include ensuring new development adapts to the effects of climate change. As a result, the policy should have a positive effect on the objectives relating to adapting to climate change and providing and maintaining Green Infrastructure.
- 4.2.8 Whilst the development principles do not specifically seek to ensure that new development leads to the provision of good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing, the policy could have a positive effect on this objective by encouraging new development (including residential development) to contribute to reductions in carbon dioxide and achieve minimum standards for sustainability.
- 4.2.9 There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives and, as such, no mitigation measures are proposed.

CS3: Housing Supply, Delivery and Distribution

- 4.2.10 The policy seeks to deliver a sufficient number of houses to meet Knowsley's needs and ensure that the tenure, type and size of housing delivered supports the re-balancing of the housing market to better meet the needs and demands of Knowsley's communities. As a result,

it is considered that the policy has the potential to have a major positive effect on the objective of providing good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing, and some positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and social deprivation and health.

4.2.11 The policy is likely to generate some employment and training opportunities in the construction sector. In addition, the provision of high quality residential developments can ensure that the Borough attracts a suitable workforce and thereby have a positive effect on the ongoing competitiveness of businesses. As a result, it is envisaged that the policy would have a positive effect on the objectives of improving educational attainment, training and employability; improving the competitiveness of business and increasing the number of new businesses; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment. The provision of high quality housing could also encourage people currently employed in Knowsley to live in the Borough which would have a positive impact on the objective of reducing the need to travel.

4.2.12 The policy indicates that the majority of housing delivered in the Borough would be directed to locations that have good accessibility to Knowsley's town centres. In addition, the rebalancing of the housing market is likely to entail the increased provision of three-bedroom and executive housing which could attract highly skilled workers to the Borough and result in more spending in the Borough's town, district and local centres. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would have a positive effect on the objective of enhancing the vitality and viability of Knowsley's town and local centres.

4.2.13 There are no anticipated negative effects on the sustainability objectives. The policy directs new housing principally to the existing urban area and states that a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare will be required for residential development. As a result, the policy should have a positive effect on the objective relating to protecting land and its sub-objectives of reducing the amount of derelict and contaminated land. The policy does however allow for the release of Green Belt land to meet housing land needs in the longer term and therefore the degree to which it would make a positive effect on this objective in the long term is less certain.

4.2.14 It is also considered that the policy would have an uncertain effect on the objective relating to mitigating climate change as it is considered to be uncertain whether the increase in carbon emissions arising from the built development proposed would be outweighed by the mitigation measures built into the policy. The effect of the policy on the objective relating to minimising the production of waste is also considered to be uncertain.

CS4: Economy and Employment

- 4.2.15 The policy seeks to support sustainable economic growth; provide sufficient land to meet employment development needs; improve accessibility to an appropriate range of jobs; and address skills and educational barriers to employment. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; improving the competitiveness of business and increasing the number of new businesses; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment; and some positive effect on the objective relating to improving opportunities for lifelong learning and employability. The policy does however encourage recruitment targeted towards communities living in and around the development site and it is recognised that this may not include areas of greatest deprivation. This reduces the degree of certainty that the policy would have a major positive effect on reducing long-term unemployment.
- 4.2.16 The policy seeks to direct retail and town centre leisure uses to existing town centres. It is therefore anticipated that the policy would also have a major positive effect on the objective of enhancing the vitality and viability of town and local centres. It is however considered that the certainty that the policy would have a major positive effect on this objective could be increased if the policy stated that an impact assessment would be applied to out of centre office development and, if possible, identified a locally defined floorspace threshold at which this test will be applied. Directing retail and town centre leisure uses to existing town centres, which are all considered to be accessible by public transport, should also have some positive effect on the objectives relating to access to goods and services; protecting air quality; and improving the use of more sustainable modes of travel. The promotion of mixed use employment/residential schemes and encouraging of home working through improvements to digital communications and telecommunications infrastructure should also ensure the policy has a positive effect on the objectives relating to air quality and improving the use of more sustainable modes of travel. The policy states that transport linkages between housing and employment areas will be improved but it does not specify by what means of transport. This reduces the level of certainty that the policy would have a positive effect on the objective of improving the use of sustainable transport modes.
- 4.2.17 The Merseyside Economic Review (2012) identifies the visitor economy as a key sector which has the potential to create new jobs and the supporting text to the policy identifies the heritage of Prescot as offering scope for contributing towards this sector. The policy may therefore support efforts to protect and enhance Prescot Conservation Area and could thereby have a positive effect on the objective relating to the preservation and enhancement of Knowsley's built heritage. However, as the policy does not specifically seek to protect and

enhance this designated heritage asset there is only a limited degree of certainty that the policy would have a significant direct impact on this objective.

4.2.18 The policy directs new employment development principally to the existing urban area which should have a positive effect on the objective relating to protecting land and its sub-objectives of reducing the amount of derelict and contaminated land. The policy does however allow for the release of Green Belt land to meet employment land needs in the longer term which has the potential to have a negative impact on the objective. It is however acknowledged that the Council's Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2010) and the Liverpool City Region Housing and Economic Development Evidence Base Overview Study (2011) demonstrate that Knowsley may be unable to meet its development needs without releasing some Green Belt land. As such, not releasing land from the Green Belt may result in additional development pressure being placed upon greenfield sites within the urban area which would have a negative impact on the objective. The impact of the policy on the objective relating to protecting land is therefore considered to be uncertain in the longer term.

4.2.19 It is also considered that the policy would have an uncertain effect on the objective relating to mitigating climate change as it is considered to be uncertain whether the increase in carbon emissions arising from the built development proposed would be outweighed by the mitigation measures built into the policy. The effect of the policy on the objective relating to minimising the production of waste is also considered to be uncertain.

CS5: Green Belt

4.2.20 The policy would have a positive effect on a number of sustainability objectives, particularly in the short and medium term. Through the provision of a number of reserve and safeguarded locations for housing and employment development the policy would provide an additional mechanism to ensure that there is sufficient housing and employment land to meet the needs of the Borough in the latter stages of the plan period. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; housing; the growth potential of business sectors; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment. In addition, by ensuring development is directed principally to the urban area in the short to medium term and by ensuring there is sufficient land to meet the Knowsley's housing needs, it is considered that policy could help increase expenditure in Knowsley's town and local centres and therefore have a positive effect on the objective of enhancing the vitality and viability of town and local centres.



4.2.21 By ensuring housing and employment development is directed to the urban area in the short and medium term, the policy is likely to result in the protection of greenfield sites outside the urban area and thereby have a positive effect in the short and medium term on the objectives relating to health; landscape character and accessibility; Green Infrastructure; and land and soil. However, the policy would result in some housing and employment development in the Green Belt in the longer term. Consequently, in the longer term it is envisaged that the policy would have the potential to have a negative effect on the objective relating to land and soil and an uncertain effect on the objectives relating to landscape character and accessibility; and Green Infrastructure. Key mitigation measures to address some of these impacts will include ensuring new development is built to an appropriate density, retaining areas of woodland, securing the provision of on-site open space, and securing appropriate landscaping to moderate the impact of proposals on the local landscape character.

4.2.22 As some of the 'reserved' and 'safeguarded' locations that are identified for release from the Green Belt contain areas that are used for informal recreation and others contain sports pitches, it is considered that the policy could also have a long term negative impact on health. Key mitigation measures are likely to include securing on-site public open space, the provision of replacement sports pitches and, if required, appropriate on-site health facilities at 'reserved' and 'safeguarded' locations. The proximity of some of the locations to listed buildings and/or conservation areas and the presence of archaeological assets within some of locations mean that the policy would have an uncertain impact on the objective relating to built heritage in the longer term. Similarly, the supporting text to the policy notes that some of the reserved and safeguarded locations are subject to various constraints, including local designations such as Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites. It is therefore considered that the policy has the potential to have a negative impact in the longer term on the objective relating to biodiversity. Undertaking ecological surveys, excluding areas of priority habitat from the developable area and the provision of on-site habitats are all likely to be key mitigation measures.

4.2.23 The policy would have the potential to result in more dispersed patterns of development in the longer term. In addition, the construction and operation of the development that would be delivered on the reserve and safeguarded locations in the longer term would inevitably result in carbon dioxide emissions. Consequently, and notwithstanding the fact that the Knowsley Local Plan Transport Feasibility Assessment (2012) identified that some of these locations have good accessibility to bus routes, cycle routes and services and facilities, it is considered that the policy would have an uncertain effect in the longer term on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change; protecting air quality; and minimising the need to travel.

CS6: Town Centres and Retail Strategy

- 4.2.24 By directing investment to Knowsley's town, district and local centres it is envisaged that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to enhancing the vitality and viability of town and local centres and exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses. Given that each of the Knowsley's town centres are accessible by public transport and that the policy would therefore support the provision of a range of services and facilities in accessible locations, it is also considered that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; and access to goods, services and amenities; and some positive effect on the objectives that relate to health; education; mitigating climate change; air quality; and reducing the need to travel and improving the use of more sustainable transport modes. It is however acknowledged that there is only a low level of certainty over the effect of the policy on the objective concerned with air quality due to the additional investment in Knowsley's centres potentially increasing the amount of vehicular movements within these areas.
- 4.2.25 By enhancing the vitality and viability of Knowsley's centres, the policy is likely to increase the amount of activity and natural surveillance in these centres and thereby have a positive effect on the objective of reducing crime and fear of crime. The investment in Knowsley's centres, particularly Prescott town centre, could also result in some positive effect on the objective of preserving, enhancing and managing Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings, areas, sites and features. The policy would encourage the redevelopment of derelict, underused and/or contaminated land within Knowsley's town, district and local centres and should therefore have a positive effect on the objective of protecting land and soil. In addition, the encouragement afforded to the provision of residential uses within Knowsley's town centres should have a positive effect on the objective relating to housing and the policy should also support the generation of employment opportunities that would have a positive effect on the objective of maintaining high and stable levels of employment.
- 4.2.26 The policy would result in significant investment being directed to Knowsley's town centres. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment noted that surface water flooding incidents in the Borough are predominantly associated with highway flooding and are prevalent in all major conurbations within the Council's boundaries, including Halewood, Huyton, Prescott, Knowsley Village and Kirkby. Nevertheless, other policies in the Local Plan should ensure that development is directed to areas at the lowest risk of flooding and that appropriate measures are taken to ensure new development does not exacerbate flood risk. It is therefore considered that the policy is unlikely to have any significant effect on the objective relating to adapting to climate change.

4.2.27 There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

CS7: Transport Networks

4.2.28 The policy relating to Transport Networks seeks to improve the choice and use of more sustainable transport modes by ensuring new development is located and designed to prioritise sustainable modes of travel through a choice of walking, cycling and public transport. It requires larger scale proposals to be located in the most accessible locations and states that the Council will give priority to schemes that provide for improvements to the rail network, enhanced provision for buses, Line 1 of the Merseytram scheme, and the delivery of an enhanced provision of walking and cycling routes as part of the Green Infrastructure network. Consequently, whilst it is recognised that there can only be a limited degree of certainty that the Merseytram line to Kirkby will be delivered due to funding not being secured, it is considered that the broader scope of the policy interventions have the potential to support a positive shift to more sustainable modes of transport. It is therefore considered that the policy could have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change and improving the choice and use of more sustainable transport modes; and some positive impact on the objective of protecting air quality.

4.2.29 The policy seeks to ensure that the Borough has a sustainable transport system that enables people to get to where they need to go by walking, cycling and public transport. It also requires new development to be located and designed to promote accessibility and stipulates that larger scale proposals (which would include major employment-led developments and health and education facilities) should be located in the most accessible locations. The policy also provides support for strategic transport schemes that would improve access to major employment locations, such as Liverpool City Centre, Liverpool John Lennon Airport and the Port of Liverpool. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objective relating to poverty and deprivation; and a positive effect on the objectives of improving access to services and facilities; reducing unemployment; reducing health inequalities; and improving educational attainment and opportunities for lifelong learning. It is also considered that the policy would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to the competitiveness of businesses in Knowsley by facilitating the efficient movement of people and goods within the Borough. Furthermore, the requirement for new development to comply with maximum parking standards should reduce the amount of land that is required for parking and therefore have a positive effect on the objective of protecting land and soil quality.

4.2.30 There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives and, as such, no mitigation measures are proposed.

CS8: Green Infrastructure

4.2.31 The policy for Green Infrastructure would have a positive effect on a large number of objectives, especially those relating to environmental issues. The key objective of the policy is to maintain and enhance Knowsley's Green Infrastructure by, amongst other things, protecting and enhancing strategically important greenspaces; protecting, maintaining and enhancing existing open space; maximising opportunities to introduce biodiversity into existing areas of green infrastructure; and delivering new integrated and functional green infrastructure. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to providing, conserving and enhancing Green Infrastructure; protecting biodiversity; and protecting and enhancing landscape character and accessibility. It would also have some positive effect on the objective relating to protecting and restoring land and soil quality.

4.2.32 The policy states that planning powers will be used to, amongst other things, deliver new integrated and functional Green Infrastructure that provides mitigation and adaptation to climate change, such as sustainable drainage systems, carbon capture and storage, and green roofs. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would also have a major positive effect on the objective relating to mitigating climate change and its sub-objective of minimising flood risk. The delivery of green roofs and Green Infrastructure that contributes to carbon capture and storage should make a positive contribution to reducing carbon emissions. In addition, the provision of green paths and cycle ways could encourage walking and cycling as an alternative to travelling by car. It is therefore considered that the policy also has the potential to have a positive effect on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change; air quality; and the use of more sustainable transport modes.

4.2.33 Several of Knowsley's Conservation Area Appraisals acknowledge the importance of areas of open space for the character and setting of the conservation area, for instance those prepared for Ingoe Lane, Knowsley Village and Old Hall Lane. The policy seeks to protect, manage and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure network in order to, amongst other things, preserve the character and function of the historic environment. It is therefore considered that the policy could also have a positive effect on the objective that relates to the preservation of Knowsley's built heritage.

4.2.34 By seeking to protect and maintain Green Infrastructure that provides opportunities for sport and recreation, the policy could help provide opportunities for participation in sport and recreation which would have

a positive effect on the objectives relating to health; and poverty and social deprivation. It is however recognised that the provision of opportunities for sport and recreation does not necessarily guarantee engagement in these activities and, as a result, there is only a low level of certainty about the effect on these objectives. The provision of an enhanced Green Infrastructure network within the Borough may increase the desirability of Knowsley as a destination for investment which would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; business competitiveness; and high and stable levels of employment. It is however acknowledged that there is only a low level of certainty about this impact as it is recognised that a large range of factors influence the investment decisions of businesses.

4.2.35 There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

4.3 Summary of the Significant Effects of the Principal Regeneration Areas

4.3.1 The Council recognises that significant change and development will be needed in parts of Knowsley if the vision and spatial strategy for the Borough are to be achieved. The Council also acknowledge that the greatest need and opportunity for comprehensive change are in a series of areas defined as Principal Regeneration Areas. As a consequence, the Core Strategy sets out the Council's intended approach to guiding future development in each of these areas. The following section gives a summary of the outcomes of the SA of the each of these Principal Regeneration Areas.

CS9: North Huyton and Stockbridge Village

4.3.2 The policy for North Huyton and Stockbridge Village would have a positive effect on a wide range of objectives. In particular, by providing new housing development of a range of types suitable for local needs and also supporting the delivery of an enhanced provision of retail, leisure and community facilities, the policy would have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to deprivation and social inclusion; access to goods, services and amenities; and housing. It will also have a positive effect on the objectives relating to health and educational attainment.

4.3.3 The policy would result in the provision of public open spaces within a wider Green Infrastructure network. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to landscape and Green Infrastructure. The proposed transport provision, incorporating public transport, walking and cycling, and the provision of increased local facilities, should also ensure that the policy also has a positive effect on the objectives relating to air quality; reducing the need to travel and the use of more sustainable transport modes.



- 4.3.4 The policy would support the provision of new leisure, community, education and training facilities and local retail provision in North Huyton and Stockbridge Village centre. The policy also specifies that the retail provision would be of a scale and function which meets the needs of the area. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a positive effect on the objective of enhancing the vitality and viability of town and local centres and the sub-objective of improving community facilities. The provision of these facilities should also result in the creation of some additional employment opportunities and would improve access to training. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to increasing the number of new businesses; and reducing long term unemployment. It is however recognised that there is only a low level of certainty over the effect on the objective concerned with increasing the number of new businesses as the policy acknowledges that any new employment provision would be small scale.
- 4.3.5 The policy has the potential to have a positive effect on the objective relating to crime and fear of crime by increasing the levels of activity and natural surveillance in North Huyton and Stockbridge Village. In addition, the policy is likely to have a positive effect on the objective of protecting and restoring land by leading to the redevelopment of existing unpopular housing stock and previously developed sites.
- 4.3.6 There are no anticipated negative effects on the sustainability objectives. It is however considered that the policy would have an uncertain effect on the objective relating to mitigating climate change as it is considered to be uncertain whether the increase in carbon emissions arising from the built development would be outweighed by the mitigation measures built into the policy.
- 4.3.7 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has demonstrated that parts of the Principal Regeneration Area are within Flood Zones 2 and 3. It is likely that climate change will exacerbate this flood risk. Nevertheless, the policy notes that the level of housing to be provided in the area will take flood management into account. Furthermore, the policy supports the provision of public open space which is likely to reduce rates of surface water run-off and help moderate the higher summer temperatures that are anticipated as a result of climate change. As a result, it is considered that the effect of the policy on the objective of adapting to climate change would be neutral.

CS10: Kirkby Town Centre

- 4.3.8 The policy would have a positive effect on a wide range of sustainability objectives. In particular, the policy would lead to the retail-led regeneration of Kirkby town centre. It would increase the amount of commercial floorspace in the centre, provide space for employment uses and result in the provision of a wide range of uses in Kirkby town

centre, including comparison and convenience retail floorspace, key services, leisure facilities and enhancements to the evening economy. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to the enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and increasing the number of new businesses; and a positive effect on the objective that seeks to improve access to goods, services and facilities. The resultant increased levels of activity and natural surveillance in the town centre could also have a positive effect on the objective of reducing crime and fear of crime.

4.3.9 The policy would result in the provision of facilities and employment opportunities in a location that is accessible from areas of deprivation. It is therefore considered that the policy has the potential to have a positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and social inclusion; and reducing long-term unemployment. The policy would deliver improved facilities for sustainable transport, including improvements to Kirkby bus station, safeguarding the potential delivery of the Merseytram Line 1 and the creation of new footpaths and cycleways. Whilst it is noted that the funding for delivering the Merseytram is unsecured, it is considered that the other aspects of the policy should ensure some modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport and, as a result, the policy should have a positive effect on the objectives relating to air quality and the use of more sustainable transport modes.

4.3.10 The policy would result in the redevelopment of some previously developed sites around the town centre. It is therefore envisaged that the policy could reduce the need to release greenfield sites for development and thereby have a positive effect on the objective relating to protecting land and soil. It is also considered that the policy would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to health and educational attainment but it is acknowledged that there is only a low level of certainty that the policy would have a positive effect on these objectives.

4.3.11 The policy would result in significant investment being directed to Kirkby town centre. The SFRA noted that surface water flooding incidents in the Borough are predominantly associated with highway flooding and are prevalent in all major conurbations within the Council's boundaries, including Kirkby. Nevertheless, other policies in the Local Plan should ensure that development is directed to areas at the lowest risk of flooding within the centre and that appropriate measures are taken to ensure new development does not exacerbate flood risk. It is therefore considered that the policy is unlikely to have a significant effect on the objective relating to adapting to climate change.

4.3.12 There are no anticipated negative effects on the sustainability objectives. It is however considered that the policy would have an uncertain effect on the objective relating to mitigating climate change

as it is considered to be uncertain whether the increase in carbon emissions arising from the built development would be outweighed by the mitigation measures built into the policy. The built development would also result in the use of water and minerals. It is however considered that the policy would have no significant effect on this objective as the use of water and mineral resources to support the identified need to regenerate Kirkby town centre would constitute a prudent use of these resources and it also acknowledged that other policies in the Local Plan will ensure that new development incorporates sustainable design principles and achieves high standards of resource efficiency. Whilst the Principal Regeneration Area is located in relatively close proximity to the Old Hall Lane Conservation Area, it is noted that Hall Lane provides a strong physical barrier between Kirkby town centre and the conservation area. It is therefore considered that the policy is unlikely to have a significant effect on the objective relating to the protection and enhancement of Knowsley's built heritage.

CS11: Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks

4.3.13 The policy would have a positive effect on several objectives. By resulting in the provision of a mix of new employment development in a location that is accessible from areas of deprivation and by introducing measures to improve the accessibility of the parks from Kirkby, the policy would have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; the growth potential of businesses; and levels of employment and long term unemployment. It is anticipated that the significance of the positive effect on each of these objectives will increase as the Plan's proposals take effect. The policy would also result in Green Infrastructure enhancements to Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks and the supporting text to the policy states that there is scope to enhance existing green and open spaces within the parks, such as Charley Wood and Acornfield Plantation. It is therefore considered that the policy will have a positive effect on the objectives relating to biodiversity and Green Infrastructure.

4.3.14 The policy does not directly seek to address access to training and opportunities for lifelong learning. Nevertheless, it is recognised that the investment in Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks may create new jobs and access to job-based training. It is therefore considered that the policy has the potential to have a positive effect on the objective relating to access to education, training and opportunities for lifelong learning. It is however acknowledged that there is only a low level of certainty over this impact. By supporting the creation of new footpaths and cycle routes the policy has the potential to encourage healthier lifestyles and thereby have a positive effect on the objective relating to health. It is however recognised that the provision of opportunities for walking and cycling does not necessarily guarantee

engagement in these activities and, as a result, there is also only a low level of certainty about the impact on this objective.

4.3.15 By encouraging the redevelopment of Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks, the policy would reduce the need to release new sites for development in the short and medium term. As such, it is likely to initially have a positive effect on the objectives relating to landscape character; and protecting land and soil. Nevertheless, the policy has the potential to result in the loss of Green Belt sites later in the plan period and it is therefore considered that in the longer term the policy would have an uncertain effect on the objective relating to landscape character and a negative effect on the objective relating to protecting land and soil. Ensuring development is built to an appropriate density to minimise the need to release further greenfield sites is likely to be a key mitigation measure.

4.3.16 The policy would have an uncertain effect on several other objectives. The policy incorporates a range of measures to reduce contributions to climate change, such as enhancements to sustainable transport infrastructure and the identification of the parks as a 'Priority Zone' for the production of renewable, low carbon and decentralised energy. It is however uncertain whether these measures would outweigh the inevitable increase in carbon emissions arising from the built development proposed. As such, the impact on the objective of mitigating climate change is uncertain.

4.3.17 The policy would result in B1 office provision in an out of centre location. It is acknowledged that the opportunities and potential for significant new office development in Knowsley's town centres may be limited. However, there is no evidence provided to demonstrate that this office provision could not be accommodated in a more sequentially preferable location or that directing this office provision to this location would not have a detrimental impact on Knowsley's town centre. As a result, and also due to the fact that the scale of the B1 office provision is presently unknown, it is considered that the effect of the policy on the objective relating to the vitality and viability of Knowsley's town centres is uncertain.

4.3.18 The policy incorporates measures to reduce car use, such as improved public transport interchange facilities and the creation of footpaths and cycleways. In addition, the provision of a local service centre to meet the needs of the workforce may reduce the need to travel. Nevertheless, given the uncertainty over the amount and nature of the new employment uses that would be delivered, and the potential for these uses to generate significant volumes of traffic, it is considered that the effect of the policy on the objectives relating to air quality and the use of sustainable modes of transport is also uncertain.

CS12: Tower Hill

- 4.3.19 The policy for Tower Hill would largely have a positive effect on the sustainability objectives. It would deliver a range of dwellings to provide a wider choice of housing in Tower Hill and would also result in small scale enhancements to health and leisure facilities and improvements to the quality and accessibility of open space. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and social inclusion; and the provision of good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing. The provision of this housing, facilities and accessible open space should also ensure that the policy has some positive effect on the objectives relating to community severance; health; the accessibility of the landscape; and Green Infrastructure.
- 4.3.20 Due to the range of public transport enhancements proposed, it is considered that the policy has the potential to support a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport and thereby have a positive effect on the objectives relating to air quality and the use of sustainable modes of transport. There is however only a low level of certainty over the positive effect on these objectives due to the funding for several of the public transport enhancements being unsecured.
- 4.3.21 The policy would deliver small scale enhancements to local education facilities and would also deliver measures to improve physical access to employment opportunities. It is therefore considered that the policy could have a positive effect on the objectives relating to educational attainment; and reducing long-term unemployment. The policy would result in small scale enhancements to the retail provision in Tower Hill which would have a positive effect on the vitality and viability of the Moorfield local centre. The policy does however also specify that the level of retail provision will be appropriate to the scale and function of the centre and would compliment that of Kirkby town centre. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would have a positive effect on the objective of protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of Knowsley's town and local centres.
- 4.3.22 A large proportion of the Tower Hill Principal Regeneration Area comprises of previously developed land and poor quality open space from where tower blocks were demolished in the 1990s. By encouraging the redevelopment of these areas the policy could have a positive effect on the objective that seeks to manage and restore land and soil quality and its sub-objective of directing new development to previously developed land. It is also considered that the policy could have a positive effect on the objective of adapting to flood risk by securing the provision of greenspaces that help to reduce rates of surface water run-off and mitigate the higher summer temperatures that are anticipated as a result of climate change.

4.3.23 There are no anticipated negative effects on the sustainability objectives. It is however considered that the policy would have an uncertain effect on the objective relating to mitigating climate change as it is considered to be uncertain whether the increase in carbon emissions arising from the built development would be outweighed by the mitigation measures built into the policy.

CS13: South Prescott

4.3.24 The policy for South Prescott would have a largely positive effect on the sustainability objectives. It would result in the redevelopment of former industrial land, much of which is now vacant, and could therefore have a major positive effect on the objective of protecting, managing and restoring land and soil quality. The policy would result in the provision of accessible employment opportunities and a range of dwellings to meet identified local need. It is therefore considered that the policy would also have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and social inclusion; providing good quality housing; increasing the number of new businesses; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment. It is considered that this positive effect will increase in significance as the Plan's proposals take effect.

4.3.25 The policy would result in the creation of new footpaths and cycles routes to provide a sustainable extension to the Whiston to Cronton green link. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would have a positive effect on the objective relating to Green Infrastructure and its sub-objective of improving the size and quality of the Green Infrastructure network. The provision of these new footpaths and cycles routes could also have a positive effect on the objectives relating to reducing community severance and improving health. It is however recognised that the provision of new footpaths and cycle routes does not guarantee that people will make an increasing proportion of their journeys on foot or by bicycle. It is therefore considered that there is only a low level of certainty that the policy would have a positive effect on the objective relating to health.

4.3.26 The policy would result in the delivery of a mixed use development in South Prescott and it is noted that the Knowsley Local Plan Transport Feasibility Assessment (2012) identified that South Prescott has good accessibility to railway stations, bus routes and cycle routes. Consequently, and also taking into account the fact that the policy would create new footpaths and cycles routes, it is considered that the policy could also have a positive effect on the objectives relating to protecting air quality; and minimising the need to travel and increasing the use of public transport.

4.3.27 There are no anticipated negative effects on the sustainability objectives. It is however considered that the policy would have an uncertain effect on the objective relating to mitigating climate change

as it is considered to be uncertain whether the increase in carbon emissions arising from the built development would be outweighed by the mitigation measures built into the policy. The policy would result in B1 office provision in an out of centre location. It is acknowledged that there are heritage constraints in Prescott town centre which may mean that there are no suitable, available and viable locations in the town centre for B1 offices of the scale that can be accommodated in South Prescott. However, there is no evidence provided to demonstrate that this office provision could not be accommodated in the centre or that directing office provision to this out of centre location would not have a detrimental impact on Prescott town centre. As a result, and also due to the fact that the scale of the B1 office provision is presently unknown, it is considered that the impact of the policy on the objective relating to the vitality and viability of Knowsley's town centres is uncertain.

CS14: Prescott Town Centre

- 4.3.28 The policy for Prescott town centre has the potential to have a positive effect on a wide range of sustainability objectives. It is envisaged that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objective of enhancing the vitality and viability of town and local centres by directing investment to Prescott town centre, intensifying its retail function and encouraging a wider mix of uses in the centre. The Knowsley Local Plan Economic Viability Assessment (2012) does however indicate that comparison retail in Prescott town centre is generally unviable in current market conditions, which reduces the level of certainty that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objective in the short and medium term.
- 4.3.29 By encouraging the provision of employment and retail uses in Prescott town centre the policy could have a positive effect on the objective of increasing the number of new businesses and its sub-objective of increasing commercial floorspace. The provision of a mix of uses in Prescott town centre should also create a number of employment opportunities and improve access to services and facilities, particularly as Prescott town centre is accessible by a choice of modes of transport. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and social inclusion; community severance; health; educational attainment; and levels of employment. It is however recognised that there is only a low level of certainty that the policy would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to health and educational attainment as it only indicates a willingness to accommodate these uses in the town centre rather than proposing to provide them.
- 4.3.30 The policy would direct investment to Prescott town centre, which is a designated conservation area that is considered to be at risk. This investment would present opportunities to enhance the setting and significance of this heritage asset and may also encourage the reuse of

any vacant or under-used heritage assets. It is noted that other policies in the Plan will ensure that the Borough's historic and architectural assets are protected and the policy also states that the historic assets of the town would be used to maximise tourism and cultural opportunities. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objective relating to Knowsley's built heritage. The provision of a mix of uses in Prescott town centre should also help people to meet their needs locally and could thereby have a positive effect on the objectives relating to air quality and reducing the need to travel.

4.3.31 There are no anticipated negative effects on the sustainability objectives. It is however considered that the policy would have an uncertain impact on the objective relating to mitigating climate change as it is considered to be uncertain whether the increase in carbon emissions arising from the built development would be outweighed by the mitigation measures built into the policy. The built development would also result in the use of water and minerals. It is however considered that the policy would have no significant effect on this objective as the use of water and mineral resources to support the identified need to regenerate Prescott town centre would constitute a prudent use of these resources and it also acknowledged that other policies in the Local Plan will ensure that new development incorporates sustainable design principles and achieves high standards of resource efficiency.

4.4 Summary of the Significant Effects of the Thematic Policies

4.4.1 In addition to the Spatial Strategy and Principal Regeneration Areas, the Core Strategy also contains a series of Thematic Policies. These policies will be essential for realising the Vision for Knowsley. The following section gives a brief summary of the outcomes of the SA of each of these policies.

CS15: Delivering Affordable Housing

4.4.2 The policy has the potential to have a positive effect on a number of social, environmental and economic objectives. It would support the delivery of well-designed, affordable housing and would require new affordable housing to comply with the design standards set out in policy CS17, including Code for Sustainable Homes Standards. The policy is therefore likely to have a positive impact on the objectives of providing good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing; reducing poverty and social deprivation; and improving health.

4.4.3 It is noted that the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2010) identified a need to provide over 5,000 affordable housing units over a ten-year period in order to meet the outstanding and arising

need for affordable housing in Knowsley. The required percentage contribution to affordable housing set out in the policy (25%) will however only provide approximately 2,000 units during the entire plan period although registered providers may contribute additional units. Evidence presented in the Knowsley Local Plan Economic Viability Assessment (2012) does however suggest that pursuing a higher percentage may impact on the viability of residential development in certain parts of the Borough. On this basis, the adoption of the 25% figure whilst reducing the positive effect to a minor level (as a consequence of only addressing a proportion of the overall identified need), is considered to increase the level of certainty that the policy would secure the maximum achievable delivery of affordable housing units relative to identified needs.

- 4.4.4 By requiring new affordable housing to comply with the design standards set out in policy CS17, including Code for Sustainable Homes Standards, the policy should have a positive effect on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change; using water and mineral resources prudently; and minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery rates. The provision of affordable housing should also help ensure the Borough attracts an adequate workforce to support its economy. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a positive effect on the objective of improving the competitiveness and productivity of business, exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses.
- 4.4.5 There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

CS16: Specialist and Supported Accommodation

- 4.4.6 It is considered that the policy on Specialist and Supported Accommodation has the potential to have a positive effect on a wide range of sustainability objectives. In particular, by resulting in the provision of housing to meet the needs of households requiring specialist housing or supported accommodation, the policy should have a positive effect on the objectives of providing good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing; reducing poverty and social deprivation; and improving health and reducing health inequalities.
- 4.4.7 The policy would require specialist housing and supported accommodation to comply with the design standards set out in policy CS19. These standards include Code for Sustainable Homes standards and it is therefore envisaged that the policy would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change; using water and mineral resources prudently; and minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery rates. The standards also include requiring new development to respond to

the challenges posed by climate change and being designed to minimise crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. As a result, the policy should also have a positive effect on the objectives relating to adapting to climate change and reducing crime, disorder and fear of crime. The requirement to comply with the design standards set out in policy CS19 should also ensure that the policy has a positive effect on the objective relating to preserving and enhancing Knowsley's built heritage; protecting the character and accessibility of the landscape; protecting biodiversity; and conserving and maintaining Green Infrastructure.

- 4.4.8 The policy requires specialist and supported residential accommodation to be located in an appropriate environment, near to public transport links and local amenities. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would help the occupants of this accommodation to meet their needs locally or by public transport. As a result, the policy would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to reducing the need to travel and improving the use of more sustainable transport modes; improving local accessibility of goods, services and amenities; and protecting local air quality.
- 4.4.9 There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

CS17: Housing Sizes and Design Standards

- 4.4.10 The policy has the potential to have a positive effect on a range of objectives. The Knowsley Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies that the housing market needs to be re-balanced and, in particular, highlights that shortages exist for larger, executive market homes and for smaller one- and two-bedroom units in the affordable sector. The policy would help ensure that a mix of housing is provided in order to meet local needs and contribute to the re-balancing of the housing market. In addition, by specifying that the new housing would have to comply with the Code for Sustainable Homes standards, the policy should ensure that the new homes are built to a high standard of energy efficiency. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objective of providing good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing. The provision of a greater mix of housing could also help attract high paying employers and their employees to the area in order to attract high quality high paying employers to the area. The policy could thereby have some positive effect on the objectives relating to increasing the number of new businesses; enhancing the vitality and viability of Knowsley's town centres; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment.
- 4.4.11 The requirement for new housing to be built to Code for Sustainable Homes standards should not only ensure that new homes achieve high standards of energy efficiency but should also ensure that new housing



incorporates appropriate facilities for recycling and integrates appropriate water conservation measures. It is therefore considered that the policy should have a positive effect on the objectives relating to mitigating climate change; minimising the production of waste and increasing recycling rates; and ensuring the prudent use of water and mineral resources. Similarly, the requirement to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes, Building for Life, Lifetime Homes standards should help minimise incidences of fuel poverty and ensure that people have access to good quality homes. It is therefore considered that the policy could have a positive effect on the objectives relating to health; and poverty and social deprivation.

4.4.12 There are no negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

CS18: Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

4.4.13 The policy would have a positive effect on a range of social, environmental and economic objectives. The policy seeks to ensure that sites for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople have ease of access to local centres, health facilities, education facilities and public transport nodes. The policy also requires sites to have a sufficient level of supporting physical infrastructure, including ensuring it can be served by adequate electricity, water, sewerage and other utilities connections. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objective relating to health and a positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; accessibility of goods, services and amenities; education; air quality; reducing the need to travel; and levels of employment. The requirement for sites for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople to have ease of access to local centres may increase levels of expenditure in these centres and thereby have a positive effect on the objective relating to the vitality and viability of Knowsley's town centres. It is however noted that the Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (2008) indicated that only a relatively small number of pitches are required in Knowsley and, as a result, there is only a low level of certainty whether the additional expenditure generated would have a significant impact on this objective.

4.4.14 The policy specifically states that flood risk will be taken into account when considering the suitability of sites for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople. It is therefore considered that the policy should have a positive effect on the objective of adapting to climate change, including flood risk. The policy would also ensure that sites for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople maintain or improve local environmental quality, including landscape character, and have suitable physical

environmental conditions, including ground conditions. It should therefore have a positive effect on the objectives of protecting land and soil quality and protecting and enhancing the local character and accessibility of the landscape.

- 4.4.15 There are no negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

- 4.4.16 The policy includes a range of measures to improve the sustainability of new development. In particular, it requires new development to respond to the challenges of climate change by integrating energy and resource efficiency and sustainable design principles and also states that new development should integrate waste recycling. The policy should therefore have a positive effect on the objectives relating to providing good quality, resource efficient housing; mitigating climate change; and minimising the production of waste. The policy also requires new development to respond to the challenges of climate change by integrating a range of measures, including biodiversity enhancements and flood risk mitigation measures. It is therefore likely to have a positive effect on the objective of adapting to climate change and its sub-objective of reducing flood risk.

- 4.4.17 The policy seeks to ensure that new development integrates with existing shopping areas which should help increase spending and investment in these centres and thereby have a positive effect on the objective concerned with the vitality and viability of Knowsley's town and neighbourhood centres. In addition, the emphasis placed upon improving accessibility and providing safe, secure and convenient routes for movement, with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport, should ensure that the policy has a positive effect on the objectives relating to improving the local accessibility of goods, services and amenities; protecting air quality; and reducing the need to travel and increasing the use of sustainable transport modes.

- 4.4.18 The policy states that new development would be expected to incorporate landscaping which promotes biodiversity and integrates existing habitats. It also requires new development to compliment Green Infrastructure and states that new development should include the provision and of open spaces and complement existing landscape and topography. It is therefore considered that the policy has the potential to have a positive effect on the objectives relating to landscape character; biodiversity; and Green Infrastructure. It is however considered that the performance of the policy against the objective that relates to landscape character could be strengthened by amending the wording so that it seeks to ensure that new development compliments and, where possible, enhances landscapes and townscapes rather than just compliment existing landscapes. The Core

Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation.

4.4.19 By requiring new development to compliment features of local importance and historic interest the policy should have a positive effect on the objective of preserving Knowsley's cultural heritage. It is however considered that the performance of the policy against this objective could be strengthened by amending the wording so that it seeks to ensure new development compliments and, where possible, enhances features of local importance and historic interest. The Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation.

4.4.20 The policy requires new development to be designed to minimise crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour and it also requires there to be community engagement during the design phase of major development proposals. The policy should therefore have a positive effect on the objectives relating to crime and ensuring community involvement in decision-making. By requiring new development to achieve high standards of design and integrate sustainable design principles and energy efficiency measures, the policy should help create more attractive places to invest and help ensure that new premises for businesses are more energy efficient. This could have a positive effect on the competitiveness of business by reducing operating costs. It is therefore considered that the policy could have a positive effect on the objective of improving the competitiveness and productivity of business, exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses.

4.4.21 There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

CS20: Managing the Borough's Heritage

4.4.22 The policy would have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. In particular, by supporting the preservation and enhancement of the Borough's historic assets and encouraging the sympathetic reuse of vacant and underused historic assets, it is envisaged that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objective of preserving, enhancing and managing Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings, areas, sites and features. It is however considered that the policy could be strengthened by amending the wording so that it provides greater protection for the setting of historic assets and also by clarifying that the policy will seek to protect and enhance locally important historic assets rather than just affording consideration to them in the decision-making process.

- 4.4.23 The policy would encourage the preservation and enhancement of the Borough's heritage assets, including sites included on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens. Accordingly, the protection afforded by the policy to parts of Knowsley Hall Park and Croxteth Park should ensure that the policy has a positive effect on the objectives of protecting the local character and accessibility of the landscape and conserving and maintaining green infrastructure.
- 4.4.24 The policy encourages the re-use of vacant and underused historic assets and states that favourable consideration will be given to schemes that enhance the importance of the asset for the economy. The policy could thereby result in the creation of premises for new businesses. In addition, protecting and enhancing buildings and features of historic interest should help create more attractive places to invest in and could lead to enhancements to Prescott town centre. Consequently, the policy also has the potential to have a positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; increasing the number of new businesses; enhancing the vitality and viability of town and local centres; and maintaining high and stable levels of employment and reducing long-term unemployment.
- 4.4.25 It is anticipated that the policy would not have a negative or uncertain effect on any of the sustainability objectives. It is however noted that the policy states that favourable consideration will be given to proposals for the re-use of vacant or underused historic assets where they would, amongst other things, retain or introduce public access. Proposals to re-use historic assets as a private dwelling may not be consistent with this element of the policy and, as a result, the policy may have some adverse impact on the provision of new, good quality housing. It is however considered that overall the policy is unlikely to have a significant effect on the objective as it is probable that the conversion of historic assets to dwellings would form a relatively small element of overall supply of good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing. Nevertheless, it is recommended that this element of the policy is amended to acknowledge that there may be instances where it is acceptable for proposals for the re-use of underused historic assets to not introduce public access.

CS21: Greenspaces and Trees

- 4.4.26 The policy for Greenspaces and Trees would have a positive effect on a wide range of objectives. The policy seeks to resist the loss of greenspace and supports improvements to existing greenspace and the provision of new areas of greenspace. The policy is therefore likely to have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of the local character and accessibility of the landscape; and provision and maintenance of Green Infrastructure; as well as some positive effect on the objectives relating to protecting land and soil; and access to services and facilities.

4.4.27 The policy seeks to resist the loss of greenspace and states that the loss of these areas will be resisted where, amongst other things, it would cause significant harm to a greenspace that has biodiversity and environmental benefits. The policy also encourages the provision of new areas of greenspace which conserve natural features, wildlife and fauna. Furthermore, the policy encourages the retention of trees, woodland and vegetation which offer a positive contribution to biodiversity/wildlife interest. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objective relating to biodiversity. By seeking to retain existing woodland and secure the appropriate planting of trees and other soft landscaping in new development, the policy should also have a positive effect on the objective relating to mitigating climate change and protecting air quality. Furthermore, the retention of greenspaces and existing trees and woodlands has the potential to provide enhanced flood risk management through water storage or reduced rates of surface water run-off. It is therefore considered that the policy has the potential to have a major positive effect on the objective relating to adapting to climate change and a positive effect on the objective of protecting the quality of inland and estuarine waters.

4.4.28 The policy seeks to ensure that there is an adequate supply of accessible, high quality greenspaces. By increasing the attractiveness of the Borough as a place to live and invest, this could have a positive effect on the objective relating to increasing the number of new businesses. The stipulation that greenspaces should be safe and secure for all members of the community to use should also ensure that the policy has a positive effect on the objective relating to reducing crime, disorder and fear of crime.

4.4.29 By seeking to resist the loss of greenspace, providing support for the improvement of existing public open spaces and encouraging the provision of new greenspaces, the policy could help provide opportunities for participation in sport and recreation which would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to health; and poverty and social deprivation. It is however recognised that the provision of opportunities for sport and recreation does not necessarily guarantee engagement in these activities and, as a result, there is only a low level of certainty about the effect on these objectives.

4.4.30 There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

CS22: Sustainable and Low Carbon Development

4.4.31 It is envisaged that the policy for Sustainable and Low Carbon Development would have a positive effect on a number of sustainability objectives, particularly those that relate to environmental issues. The policy requires new development to manage flood risk, including

through the use of sustainable drainage systems and flood resilience measures, and advocates the use of a range of other measures that may reduce surface water run-off, such as green roofs. As a result, it is considered that the policy has the potential to have a major positive effect on the objective of adapting to climate change and its sub-objective of reducing flood risk.

4.4.32 The policy requires new development to be built to Code for Sustainable Homes/BREEAM standards, requires new developments to limit energy use and encourages new development to incorporate low carbon and renewable energy technologies and use of locally sourced materials. The policy also states that new development should limit energy use through incorporating high standards of insulation, heat retention, natural ventilation and passive solar techniques. The policy would lead to the establishment 'Priority Zones' where all major developments will be encouraged to include decentralised and renewable low carbon energy systems. It is therefore considered that the policy has the potential to have a major positive effect on the objective of mitigating climate change. By requiring new development to comply with Code for Sustainable Homes/BREEAM standards and stipulating that new development should make the most effective and sustainable use of water, aggregates and other resources the policy should also have a positive effect on the objectives relating to using water and mineral resources prudently; and minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery rates. In addition, the encouraging of Sustainable Drainage Systems, landscaping and green roofs/walls should ensure that the policy also has a positive effect on the objectives relating to biodiversity; Green Infrastructure; and water quality.

4.4.33 The requirement for new housing to incorporate high standards of insulation, heat retention, natural ventilation and passive solar techniques should ensure that the policy has a positive effect on the objective relating to the provision of good quality, resource efficient housing. Given that good quality housing is a significant contributor to health and it is recognised that the provision of energy efficient housing should reduce the incidence of fuel poverty, it envisaged that the policy would also have a positive effect on the objectives relating to poverty and social deprivation and health.

4.4.34 It is recognised that the policy could have an adverse impact on house building and investment in the Borough if the costs of complying with the required standards are too great. Nevertheless, the Knowsley Local Plan Economic Viability Assessment (2012) indicates that the achievement of these standards may not impact on viability. It is also recognised that the policy makes some allowance for the relaxation of these standards where it is not technically feasible or economically

viable. It is therefore envisaged that the policy should not have an adverse impact on house building and investment in the Borough.

- 4.4.35 There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

CS23: Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure

- 4.4.36 It is envisaged that the policy would have a positive effect on a number of sustainability objectives. The policy sets out a presumption in favour of proposals for decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy provided that they would not have an unacceptable impact on communities or the natural and built environment that could not be mitigated. As a result, the policy could support the shift to more low carbon sources of energy generation and thereby have a major positive effect on the objective of mitigating climate change and its sub-objective of decreasing carbon dioxide emissions. The policy does however specify that such proposals must not cause significant harm to the character of the Green Belt. It is considered that this could significantly reduce opportunities for particular types of renewable energy unless it is underpinned with the caveat that they may be permissible when the harm to the Green Belt is outweighed by very special circumstances. It is considered that incorporating a reference to very special circumstances would increase the level of certainty that the policy would have a major positive effect on this objective. The Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation.

- 4.4.37 The support provided for proposals for decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy could help reduce the need to obtain energy from coal, oil and natural gas which are all listed as minerals of local and national importance in the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, the policy would help reduce the need to consume minerals and would thereby make a positive contribution to the objective of ensuring that minerals are used prudently and efficiently.

- 4.4.38 The policy seeks to ensure that proposals to produce and distribute decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy do not cause significant harm to public amenity, communities or the natural and built environment. It is therefore considered that the policy should also have a positive effect on the objectives relating to health; built heritage; the character and accessibility of the landscape; biodiversity and geodiversity; water quality; and air quality. It is however considered that the wording of the policy could be strengthened to clarify that the setting of historical and cultural assets will be protected from significant harm.

- 4.4.39 There are no negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

CS24: Managing Flood Risk

- 4.4.40 The policy seeks to reduce the extent and impact of flooding by directing development away from areas of greatest risk of flooding. It seeks to resist development that may cause an unacceptable risk of flooding, requires development to incorporate appropriate flood mitigation measures to manage flood risk and states that the drainage of new developments should be designed to reduce surface water run-off rates to those associated with a greenfield site. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objective of adapting to climate change.
- 4.4.41 The policy states that if flood mitigation measures are necessary they should be designed to contribute to the biodiversity where technically feasible and it specifically encourages the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems. The policy could thereby have a positive effect on the objective relating to biodiversity by encouraging the provision of new habitats and could also have a positive effect on the objectives relating to land and water quality by preventing the use of measures that could mobilise contaminants or act as a preferential flow path to convey such contaminants.
- 4.4.42 The policy seeks to prevent development, including for housing and employment uses, in locations that may cause an unacceptable risk of flooding. The Knowsley and Sefton Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2009) highlights that only small areas of Knowsley are at risk of fluvial flooding and that the majority of land at greatest risk is within the Green Belt. Land within the Green Belt is unlikely to be developed for housing unless it is identified as a 'reserve' or 'safeguarded' location in policy CS5. Whilst some of the locations for Green Belt release identified in Policy CS5 are within or adjacent to areas of flood risk, it is noted that the indicative development capacities assume no development takes places within Flood Zones 2 and 3. It is therefore considered that the policy is unlikely to restrict the provision of an adequate supply of housing and employment land in the Borough. As a result, it is concluded that the policy is unlikely to have any significant effects on the objectives relating to the provision of good quality housing and exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses.
- 4.4.43 It is envisaged that the policy would not have a negative effect on any of the sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment noted that surface water flooding incidents are prevalent in all major settlements within the Council's boundaries, including Halewood, Huyton, Prescot, Knowsley Village and Kirkby. The policy would result in development being directed away from areas that are at a higher risk of flooding and could thereby have some impact on levels of investment in the Borough's town and local centres. As a consequence, the effect of the policy on the objective of

enhancing the vitality and viability of town and local centres is considered to be uncertain. It is however recognised that the policy is in accordance with national guidance in relation to directing development away from areas at greatest risk of flooding and, as such, no mitigation measures are proposed to address this uncertain impact.

CS25: Management of Mineral Resources

- 4.4.44 The policy would have a positive effect on a wide range of objectives. In particular, it should have a major positive effect on the objective of using minerals prudently by ensuring that mineral resources are not sterilised unnecessarily and encouraging the use of recycled or secondary construction aggregates as an alternative to primary extraction.
- 4.4.45 The policy seeks to reduce the need for primary extraction by facilitating the greater use of recycled aggregates and secondary mineral products. In addition, it requires applications for mineral extraction to comply with a set of criteria which will ensure that the impacts of such developments are controlled and managed effectively. As a result, it is envisaged that the policy would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to health; Knowsley's built heritage; landscape character and accessibility; biodiversity and sites of geological importance; flood risk; land and soil quality; water quality; and air quality.
- 4.4.46 The policy would help minimise the production of waste and increase recycling and recovery rates by seeking to ensure that construction and demolition wastes are managed sustainably in accordance with the waste hierarchy. The policy could also help divert some waste from landfill by seeking to ensure that a proportion of the construction aggregates used in development is from recycled or secondary sources. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a positive effect on the objective of minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery rates.
- 4.4.47 The policy seeks to ensure that operators transport minerals in a sustainable way. In addition, by seeking to safeguard the remaining viable mineral deposits in Knowsley and by promoting the use of recycled and secondary aggregates, the policy may also reduce some of the need to import minerals into the Borough. It is therefore envisaged that the policy would also have a positive effect on the objective relating to the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 4.4.48 By facilitating the steady and adequate supply of minerals and safeguarding viable mineral deposits of current or future economic importance, the policy should help ensure that there are sufficient minerals to support the ambitious growth strategy for the Borough. The policy should therefore have some positive effect on the objectives

relating to the provision of housing; exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses; and maintaining high levels of unemployment. It is however acknowledged that the requirement to extract minerals prior to non-minerals development taking place in a Mineral Safeguarding Area could result in some delays to the development process. It is therefore considered that including a list of the types of application that would be excluded from the requirement to demonstrate that the mineral resource in that area would not be sterilised could increase the certainty of the policy having a positive effect on these objectives. The Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation.

4.4.49 It is not envisaged that the policy would have a negative effect on any of the sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, by seeking to facilitate a steady and adequate supply of minerals the policy could support extraction of coal from the Borough which could reduce the need to import coal into the country from overseas. Any coal extraction from Knowsley therefore has the potential to have a positive effect on the objective by reducing carbon emissions associated with the transportation of minerals. The burning of fossil fuels, such as coal, is however a major contributor to climate change and extracting coal from Knowsley could increase the likelihood of the UK being 'locked into' dependence on fossil fuels. As a result, it is concluded that the effect on the objective relating to mitigating climate change is uncertain. It is however recognised that there is little information about the viability of future coal extraction in Knowsley and it is therefore highly uncertain whether coal will be extracted again from the Borough. In addition, it is acknowledged that coal will remain an important part of the UK's energy mix and that the only alternative to incremental coal output in the UK is likely to be the importation of coal over long distances which would have a more significant negative effect on greenhouse gas emissions.

CS26: Waste Management

4.4.50 It is envisaged that the policy would have a positive effect on a number of sustainability objectives, particularly those that relate to environmental issues. The key purpose of the policy is to ensure that waste is managed sustainably in order to minimise waste and promote the use of reclaimed and recycled materials. The policy also specifies that new development should be designed so as to facilitate the collection and recycling of waste. It is therefore considered that the policy has the potential to have a major positive effect on the objectives relating to using mineral resources prudently and minimising the production of waste and increasing reuse, recycling and recovery rates.

4.4.51 The policy would encourage the sustainable transport of waste and would promote the use of site waste management plans to minimise the volumes of waste that need to be transported. This should ensure

that the policy has a positive effect on the objectives relating to minimising the need to travel and protecting air quality. This encouragement of the sustainable transport of waste and the promotion of measures to minimise the volumes of waste that need to be transported together with the requirement to comply with the waste hierarchy should help minimise carbon emissions associated with the transportation of waste and also reduce emissions associated with biodegradable waste going to landfill. It is therefore considered that the policy would have a major positive effect on the objective relating to climate change.

4.4.52 By seeking to minimise waste, promote the use of recycled materials and ensure that new development is designed so as to facilitate the collection and recycling of waste, the policy should help divert resources from landfill and thereby minimise the need to identify new sites for landfill. As a result, it is considered that the policy has the potential to have a positive effect on the objectives relating to land and soil quality; and water quality. The policy also seeks to minimise the impacts of waste development on communities and the environment. As such, the policy should have a positive effect on the objectives relating to health and landscape character.

4.4.53 There are no negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

CS27: Planning for and Paying for New Infrastructure

4.4.54 The policy has the potential to have a positive effect on a number of sustainability objectives. It would secure contributions towards the provision of new, and improvement of existing, physical, social, green and digital infrastructure. As a result, it is envisaged that the policy has the potential to have a positive effect on a wide range of sustainability objectives, including those that relate to poverty and deprivation; community severance; health; educational attainment; built heritage; landscape character and accessibility; biodiversity and geodiversity; adapting to climate change; mitigating climate change; Green Infrastructure; water quality; waste; the vitality and viability of centres; and unemployment.

4.4.55 Nevertheless, there is only a low level of certainty over the impact of the policy on these objectives, particularly in the short term, due to there not being a Community Infrastructure Levy in place. In addition, the policy implies that due regard will be given to the potential impacts of developer contributions on the viability of new development. Whilst this will ensure that new development should not be placed at risk due the impact of contributions on economic viability, it gives a reduced level of certainty about the contributions to infrastructure that would be secured particularly as the Knowsley Economic Viability Assessment (2012) highlights that viability may be an issue for residential

development in certain parts of the Borough and for many forms of non-residential development across the Borough. It is however recognised that the viability of developments may improve over time as economic conditions improve.

4.4.56 It is not envisaged that the policy would have a negative effect on any of the sustainability objectives. Nevertheless, it is considered that the effect of the policy on several objectives is uncertain. In particular, it is unclear whether the required contributions to infrastructure may reduce the ability of developers to also contribute to the provision of affordable housing. As a result, the effect of the policy on the objective of providing good quality, affordable housing is uncertain. Similarly, as it is unclear the extent to which the required infrastructure contributions may affect investment levels, the effect of the policy on the objective of exploiting the growth potential of business sectors and increasing the number of new businesses is also uncertain. It is also unclear whether the policy would prioritise contributions to public transport infrastructure in preference to infrastructure for less sustainable modes of transport. It is therefore unclear whether the policy would help secure a shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Consequently, the effect of the policy on the objectives relating to air quality and the use of sustainable transport modes is also considered to be uncertain.

4.5 Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects

4.5.1 Under the provisions of the SEA Directive, when appraising the sustainability of the Core Strategy it is necessary to consider whether or not there are any secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic effects.

4.5.2 A wide range of positive secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects have been identified, for example:

- By reducing poverty and social deprivation many of the policies would have the secondary effect of improving quality of life for residents in the Borough;
- By seeking to direct development to sustainable locations and/or encouraging the development and use of sustainable modes of transport, policies CS1, CS2, CS4, CS6, CS7 and CS8 and the proposals for several of the Principal Regeneration Areas could have a positive secondary impact on congestion and cumulatively deliver benefits for greenhouse gas emissions and air quality;
- By requiring new housing to be built to Code for Sustainable Homes standards policies CS15, CS16, CS17 and CS19 should have the positive secondary effect of reducing fuel poverty;
- The proposals to improve the Borough's town and local centres that are within the defined Principal Regeneration Areas could

lead to enhanced vitality and viability of these centres. This would have the secondary benefit of improving perceptions of the area;

- By seeking to increase the proportion of energy generated by renewable sources policy CS23 could reduce reliance on the importation of coal and gas and have a positive secondary impact of increasing energy security; and
- By seeking to reduce the volumes of waste generated and encouraging the recycling and re-use of waste policy CS26 could have a secondary benefit of reducing the need to identify sites for landfill.

4.5.3 Nevertheless, a number of potential negative secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic effects were also identified. For instance:

- Notwithstanding the proposals to secure enhancements to public transport provision, the policy for the Knowsley Business and Industrial Parks (CS11) has the potential to generate significant volumes of traffic which could cumulatively exacerbate congestion in parts of the Borough and have associated secondary impacts on air quality and carbon emissions; and
- The release of Green Belt sites to meet the Borough's housing has the potential to have an adverse cumulative impact on air quality.

4.6 Difference the Sustainability Appraisal Process has Made

4.6.1 The Sustainability Appraisal process concluded that the Core Strategy has the potential to deliver a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits. However, it also identified several instances where options have the potential to have a negative impact on sustainability objectives, a number of uncertain impacts and a range of opportunities for further enhancements to improve the Core Strategy's sustainability.

4.6.2 A number of specific recommendations have been made to improve the performance of the Spatial Strategy for Knowsley. These include:

- Clarifying whether the investment in service provision proposed by Policy CS1 would include investment in health and education service provision;
- Securing improvements to the public transport network to ensure that any new development built within the Green Belt is accessible by a choice of means of transport;
- Incorporating a reference to maintaining and enhancing Knowsley's local centres in policy CS1;
- Encourage recruitment targeted towards areas of greatest deprivation in addition to targeting those communities living in and around the development site in policy CS4;

- Specifying the need to improve linkages between housing and employment areas by public transport, walking and cycling in policy CS4;
- Ensuring that an impact assessment will be applied to larger scale out of centre office development and, if possible, identify a locally defined floorspace threshold at which this test will be applied;
- Ensuring any development on the 'reserve' and 'safeguarded' locations identified by policy CS5 is built to an appropriate density in order to minimise the need to release further Green Belt sites; and
- Undertaking appropriate ecological surveys, protecting priority habitat and/or Local Wildlife Sites and incorporating on-site habitats in order to reduce the impact of any development on the 'reserve' and 'safeguarded' locations identified by policy CS5 on biodiversity.

4.6.3 A number of specific recommendations have also been made to improve the performance of the Principal Regeneration Areas. Key recommendations include:

- Ensuring that development delivered through policy CS10 on the land to the south of Cherryfield Drive is effectively integrated into the existing town centre; and
- Providing evidence to demonstrate that the B1 office development to be located in Knowsley Industrial and Business Park (CS11) and South Prescott (CS13) could not be directed to a more sequentially preferable location and that directing offices to these sites would not have an unacceptable impact on Knowsley's town centres.

4.6.4 The key recommendations emanating from the SA of the Thematic Policies include:

- Consider amending the wording of policy CS19 so that it expects new development to compliment and, where possible, enhance features of local importance and historic interest (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation);
- Consider amending the wording of policy CS19 so that it expects new development to compliment and, where possible, enhance landscapes and townscapes (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation);
- Consider including the words 'where appropriate' in policy CS20 in relation to providing favourable consideration to proposals for the re-use of vacant historic assets that retain or introduce public access (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation);

- Consider amending the wording of policy CS20 so that element 1b of the policy prevents demolition/development which would adversely affect the historic asset or its setting (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation);
- Consider amending the wording of policy CS20 so that it is clear that it will seek to protect and enhance locally important historic assets;
- Consider amending the wording of policy CS23 to clarify that the policy will seek to protect the setting of historical assets (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation);
- Amend policy CS23 so that it acknowledges that very special circumstances may exist which could outweigh harm to the Green Belt (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation);
- Incorporate a requirement for proposals for the recycling of aggregates to comply with the criteria in the Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation); and
- Provide a list of the types of applications that would be excluded from the requirement to demonstrate that the proposal would not sterilise mineral resources in a Mineral Safeguarding Area in order to ensure that a proportionate approach is taken to safeguarding mineral resources (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation).

5. MONITORING

5.1 The Monitoring Report

5.1.1 The Localism Act has removed section 35(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which required local planning authorities to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for submission to the Secretary of State. The Localism Act does however still require every local planning authority to prepare reports containing information as to the extent to which the policies set out in the local development documents are being achieved. This monitoring report will provide a basis for the:

- Identification of unforeseen adverse effects and any necessary remedial action.
- Assessment of whether the Strategy is achieving the SA objectives
- Assessment of the performance of mitigation measures.

5.2 Monitoring Indicators

5.2.1 The indicators used to monitor the sustainability effects of implementing the Core Strategy were set out in the SA Scoping Report of May 2009. The indicators are set out below by sustainability objective and sub-objective:

Social

Objective	To reduce poverty and social deprivation and secure economic inclusion.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Improve the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation rating of the Borough.	Borough Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking
	Reduce the proportion of children living in poverty.	Proportion of children in poverty (NI 16)
		Percentage of children living in workless households
	Reduce the percentage of lower level Super Output Areas that are in the top 10% most deprived in England.	Lower Super Output Area ranking
	Improve health and reduce long-term limiting illness.	Residents with long term illness
	Improve rates of economic activity.	Overall employment rate (NI 151)

Objective	To improve local accessibility of goods, services and amenities and reduce community severance.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Improve community facilities.	The amount of new or renovated facilities.

Objective	To improve safety and reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Improve road safety	Numbers of people killed/seriously injured in traffic accidents (NI 47)
		Numbers of children killed/seriously injured in traffic accidents (NI 48)
	To reduce crime and fear of crime	Domestic burglaries per 1,000 dwellings
		Serious violent crime rate per 1000 population (NI 15)
		Theft of a vehicle per 1000 population.
		Percentage of residents surveyed who say that they feel fairly safe or very safe outside during the day.
		Percentage of residents surveyed who say that they feel fairly safe or very safe outside after dark.

Objective	To support voluntary and community networks, assist social inclusion and ensure community involvement in decision making.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	None identified in the SA Scoping Report	None identified in the SA Scoping Report

Objective	To improve health and reduce health inequalities.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Increase life expectancy.	Life expectancy of males
		Life expectancy of females
	Reduce mortality rates.	All age all cause mortality (males) (NI 120)
		All age all cause mortality (females) (NI 120)
		Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75 (NI 121)

	Reduce levels of obesity.	Levels of obesity
		Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6 (NI 56)
		Children and young people's participation in high-quality PE and sport. (NI 57)

Objective	To provide good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Provide a wider choice of accommodation to create a greater tenure mix.	Dwelling stock by council tax band.
		Net additional homes provided. (NI 154)
		Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (NI155)
		Housing by tenure type
	Increase the quality of housing by improving housing amenities.	Percentage of dwellings with central heating
	Minimise resource and energy use when developing housing and the energy efficiency of housing.	Percentage of non-decent council homes (NI 158)
		Percentage of new homes meeting Building for Life Assessments Good / Very Good.
		Percentage of new affordable / public homes achieving a level 3 or more code rating under the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Objective	To improve educational attainment, training and opportunities for lifelong learning and employability.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Increase educational achievement.	Percentage of residents with no qualifications.
		Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (NI 75)
		Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19 (NI 80)
		Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher (NI 163)

Objective	To preserve, enhance and manage Knowsley's rich diversity of cultural, historic and archaeological buildings, areas, sites and features.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	None identified in the SA Scoping Report	Number of listed buildings on the Heritage at Risk Register
		Number of conservation areas with current character appraisals
		Number of conservation areas with management plans.
		Number of Conservation Areas on the Heritage at Risk register
		Number of Historic Parks and Gardens on the Heritage at Risk register

Environment

Objective	To protect, enhance and manage the local character and accessibility of the landscape and countryside across Knowsley.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Provide the required amount of open space.	Hectares of open space per 1000 population by type of open space
	Provide open space in accessible locations.	Percentage of population within walking distance of open space
	Improve the quality of open space.	Percentage of open space considered to be good quality.
	Improve the cleanliness of open areas.	Percentage of space that is of a high or acceptable standard of horticultural maintenance
	Increase number of parks with green flag award.	Number of parks with green flag award

Objective	To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity, the viability of protected and endangered species, habitats, geodiversity and sites of geological importance.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	To conserve and enhance the natural environment, including species and habitat diversity.	Number and area (ha) of Local Wildlife Sites (Sites of Biological Interest)
		Progress against Biodiversity Action Plan targets

	To improve the delivery of biodiversity targets as shown in the Ecological Framework	Number of local sites in 'active conservation management' (NI 197)
		Number and area (ha) of Local Nature Reserves
		Number of Sites of Local Geological Interest
		Area (ha) of new habitats created

Objective	To adapt to climate change including flood risk.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Reduce flood risk	Number of planning permission proceeding against EA advice to refuse on flood risk grounds
		Percentage of new developments containing Sustainable Drainage Systems
		Planning to adapt to climate change (NI 188)

Objective	To mitigate climate change including using energy prudently and efficiently and increasing energy generated from renewable sources.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Reduce CO ₂ emissions.	Per capita CO ₂ emissions (NI 186)
		Renewable energy generation in megawatts

Objective	To provide, conserve, maintain and enhance green infrastructure.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	To improve size and quality of the green infrastructure network	Percentage change in the green infrastructure network
	To improve the size and quality of the Ecological Framework	Area (ha) of new habitats created

Objective	To protect, manage and restore land and soil quality.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Reduce the amount of derelict land.	Amount of previously developed land that is derelict.
	Direct new housing to previously developed land.	New build on previously developed land.

	Reduce the amount of contaminated land.	Amount of contaminated land
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Objective	To protect, improve and where necessary, restore the quality of inland, and estuarine waters.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	Increase the length of rivers in 'Good' or 'Fair' biological condition.	Percentage of rivers in "Good" or "Fair" biological condition
	Increase the length of rivers in 'Good' or 'Fair' chemical condition.	Percentage of rivers in "Good" or "Fair" chemical condition

Objective	To protect, and where necessary, improve local air quality.	
	Sub Objectives	Indicator
	None identified in the SA Scoping Report	Number and total area of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)
		Population living in AQMAs

Objective	To use water and mineral resources prudently and efficiently.	
	Sub Objective	Indicator
	None identified in the SA Scoping Report	Daily domestic water use (per capita consumption, litres)
		Use of mineral aggregates and proportion of primary aggregates used

Objective	To reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of more sustainable transport mode.	
	Sub Objective	Indicator
	Encourage sustainable transport use.	Method of travel to work
		Rates of car ownership

Objective	To minimise the production of waste and increase reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	
	Sub Objective	Indicator
	None identified in the SA Scoping Report	Household waste recycled and composted (NI 192)

		Household waste arisings which have been used to recover heat, power and other energy sources.
		Household waste arisings which have been landfilled.

Economic

Objective	To improve the competitiveness and productivity of business, exploit the growth potential of business sectors and increase the number of new businesses.	
	Sub Objective	Indicator
	Increase number of local and new businesses.	Number of VAT registrations
		Number of VAT de-registrations
	Increase industrial / commercial floorspace.	Amount of floorspace developed for employment purposes

Objective	To enhance the vitality and viability of town and local centres.	
	Sub Objective	Indicator
	Increase the vitality of shopping areas.	Amount of floorspace developed for retail use.
		Number of vacant shops
	Improve community facilities.	Amount of new or renovated facilities

Objective	Maintain high and stable levels of employment and reduce long-term unemployment.	
	Sub Objective	Indicator
	Reduce unemployment	Working age people on out of work benefits (NI 153)
		Number of persons claiming job seekers allowance for twelve months or more.

5.3 Next Steps

5.3.1 This report is being published for consultation alongside the Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document and supporting studies / assessments. The consultation provides the public, statutory consultees and other stakeholders with an opportunity to express opinions on this report and also to use it as a reference point whilst commenting on other documents included in this stage of consultation.

5.3.2 Comments are invited on the contents of the report, in terms of the appraisal methodology, the accuracy of the assessment of the likely significant effects of the plan and the opportunities for additional mitigation to ensure that the Core Strategy is as 'sustainable' as possible. All comments submitted during this period will be considered and, where appropriate, amendments may be made to the SA scoring to reflect the comments received.

5.3.4 Comments can be submitted using the following methods:

- By email, to localplan@knowsley.gov.uk; or
- By post, to:
Policy Manager (Places and Neighbourhoods)
Chief Executive's Directorate,
Knowsley Council,
Archway Road
Huyton
Knowsley
Merseyside
L36 9YU

5.3.5 Further details regarding the consultation, including the deadline for receipt of comments, can be found on the Council's website.

5.3.6 Following consideration and analysis of the consultation responses received, any significant changes made to the Proposed Submission version of the Core Strategy will be subjected to further SA. It is envisaged that the Core Strategy will be submitted to the Secretary of State in early 2013.

5.3.7 A sustainability statement showing how the SA process has influenced the content of the Core Strategy will be published. This will constitute the final part of Stage D in the SA process.

5.3.8 Once the Core Strategy has been adopted, the significant effects of implementing the plan will be monitored, which represents Stage E in the SA process.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Urban Vision Partnership Ltd were commissioned by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal of their Local Plan: Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document. The appraisal work has been informed by national guidance, best practice and the methodology proposed by the Council in their Scoping Report.
- 6.2 The SA process involved the assessment of the Approach to Sustainable Development, Spatial Strategy, Principal Regeneration Areas and Thematic Policies against the twenty-two sustainability objectives identified in the Scoping Report. This appraisal considered the degree and type of impact, split by short term (0-5 years), medium term (5-10 years), and long-term (10+ years). It also predicted the certainty of impact (in terms of high, medium and low); the scale of impact (which ranged from Borough wide to national); the permanence of the impact; any key secondary, cumulative and/or synergistic impacts; and options for mitigation.
- 6.3 The SA process concluded that the Core Strategy has the potential to deliver a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits. A number of recommendations were however made about how individual policies could perform better against the sustainability objectives. In addition, there were several instances where it was recommended that further information be provided on the effects of the options in order to provide greater certainty about their impact on the SA objectives.

Approach to Sustainable Development

- 6.4 The policy on Sustainable Development would have a positive effect on a significant proportion of the objectives. In particular, the policy's commitment that planning applications will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise would have a positive effect on the objectives relating to the provision of housing; increasing the number of new businesses; maintaining high and stable levels of employment; and reducing poverty and social deprivation. The aim to secure development that improves environmental and social conditions should also ensure that policy has a positive impact on a wide range of indicators. There are no anticipated negative or uncertain effects on the sustainability objectives.

Spatial Strategy

- 6.5 The Spatial Strategy for Knowsley (CS1) and Development Principles (CS2) are considered to be likely to have a largely positive impact on the sustainability objectives. In particular, it is envisaged that the Development Principles are likely to have a major positive impact in the long-term on the objectives relating to health; mitigating climate change; and reducing the need to travel. It was concluded that the policies for Housing Supply (CS3), the Economy and Employment



(CS4) and Town Centres and Retail (CS6) would have a positive impact on a range of objectives, particularly those that relate to social and economic issues. It is also predicted that the policy for Green Infrastructure (CS8) would have a positive impact on a range of objectives, particularly those relating to landscape character and accessibility; biodiversity; adapting to climate change; and green infrastructure.

6.6 It was however considered that a number of the policies would have an uncertain or negative impact on some of the objectives. For instance, a number of the policies, such as the Spatial Strategy (CS1) and Green Belt (CS5) would have an uncertain impact on a number of environmental objectives in the longer term due to the potential for it to result in the release of a number of sites in the Green Belt. A range of other measures were also identified to improve the performance of the policies. These include:

- Incorporating a reference to maintaining and enhancing Knowsley's local centres in policy CS1 (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation);
- Encourage recruitment targeted towards areas of greatest deprivation in addition to targeting those communities living in and around the development site in policy CS4;
- Specifying the need to improve linkages between housing and employment areas by public transport, walking and cycling in policy CS4;
- Ensuring that an impact assessment will be applied to larger scale out of centre office development and, if possible, identify a locally defined floorspace threshold at which this test will be applied;
- Ensuring any development on the 'reserve' and 'safeguarded' locations identified by policy CS5 is built to an appropriate density in order to minimise the need to release further Green Belt sites; and
- Undertaking appropriate ecological surveys, protecting priority habitat and/or Local Wildlife Sites and incorporating on-site habitats in order to reduce the impact of any development on the 'reserve' and 'safeguarded' locations identified by policy CS5 on biodiversity.

Principal Regeneration Areas

6.7 The policies for each of Principal Regeneration Areas would have a positive impact on a range of sustainability objectives, particularly those relating to social issues. The policies relating to Kirkby town centre (CS10), Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks (CS11), South Prescott (CS13) and Prescott town centre (CS14) would also have a major positive impact on at least one of the economic objectives.

6.8 Nevertheless, as each of the policies would result in built development and would therefore lead to some carbon emissions associated with

the construction and operation of this development, their impact on the objective relating to mitigating climate change is uncertain. There is also some uncertainty over the impact of the policy for Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks (CS11) on the objectives relating to air quality and need to travel, particularly as there is limited information available on the amount and nature of the new employment uses that would be delivered. In addition, due to both policies resulting in the provision of B1 office development in an out of centre location, the impact of the policies for Knowsley Industrial and Business Parks (CS11) and South Prescott (CS13) on the objective relating to the vitality and viability of Knowsley's town centres is considered to be uncertain.

6.9 A range of other measures were also identified to improve the performance of the policies. These include:

- Ensuring that development delivered through policy CS10 on the land to the south of Cherryfield Drive is effectively integrated into the existing town centre; and
- Providing evidence to demonstrate that the B1 office development to be located in Knowsley Industrial and Business Park (CS11) and South Prescott (CS13) could not be directed to a more sequentially preferable location and that directing offices to these sites would not have an unacceptable impact on Knowsley's town centres.

Thematic Policies

6.10 On the whole, the Thematic Policies performed well in the SA process. In particular, the policies relating to housing and the accommodation needs of the community (CS15 – CS18) would all have a positive impact on the objectives relating to poverty and deprivation; health and the provision of good quality housing. The policies relating to Sustainable and Low Carbon development (CS22) and Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure (CS23) would have a major positive impact on the objective relating to mitigating climate change and the policy for Greenspaces and Trees (CS21) would have a major positive impact on the objectives relating to landscapes; biodiversity; adapting to climate change; and green infrastructure.

6.11 Nevertheless, a number of measures have been suggested to improve the performance of several of the policies against the SA objectives. These include:

- Amending policy CS19 so that it expects new development to, where possible, enhance features of local importance and historic interest, landscapes and townscapes (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation);
- Amend the wording of policy CS20 so that it prevents demolition/development which would adversely affect the setting of historic assets (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation) and so that it is clear

that the policy will seek to protect and enhance locally important historic assets;

- Amend policy CS23 so that it acknowledges that very special circumstances may exist which could outweigh harm to the Green Belt (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation); and
- Provide a list of the types of applications that would be excluded from the requirement to demonstrate that the proposal would not sterilise mineral resources in a Mineral Safeguarding Area in order to ensure that a proportionate approach is taken to safeguarding mineral resources (the Core Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect this recommendation).