

## **South Shropshire Sustainability Appraisal: Draft Scoping Report for Core Strategy AONB Additional Comments**

The majority of the response from the AONB Partnership has been made in the form of tracking changes to the electronic version of the Sustainability Appraisal. These additional comments are intended to complement that document.

1. The Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan contains an action on raising the awareness of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. One of the best ways of doing this is to be consistent when referring to the designation. We are now asking that wherever possible, the phrase 'Shropshire Hills AONB' is used in preference to just 'AONB' or 'the AONB'.
2. In response to question 11, support for sustainable land management industries should be a priority and the conservation and enhancement of landscape character, in particular the Shropshire Hills AONB would come second.
3. The SA framework needs to demonstrate a logical progression. Relevant implications from the review of the policy framework could be grouped in a table to make identification of the policy 'steer' easier.

Column 6 in table 5 needs to be clarified. Some of the comments in this column actually pick out trends and issues e.g. the entry in this column in the very first line of 'Social', 'Population and Human Health'. Others are just factual.

There is also some difficulty following through from table 5 to 6. Table 5 should present the data, and analyse it to identify trends. The reasons for the trends can then be explained in table 6 – these reasons become the issues. Similar issues can be grouped if necessary – they then form the basis for the Sustainability Objectives. Once these have been defined, questions can be developed for policy assessment.

### **A rough example:**

1. Policy framework says that more affordable housing is needed. It also says that the rural economy should diversify and attractive countryside should be protected.
2. Data shows that numbers of people aged 65 and over in South Shropshire is above national average. Data shows also the number of people employed in agriculture is higher than the national average and that much of the District is in an AONB.
3. An analysis of trends shows that the number of older people is continuing to increase, agriculture is in decline and the AONB is an important factor in the tourism industry.
4. The reasons (issues) for these trends are linked to
  - the attractive countryside,
  - the availability of relatively (on a national scale) low market priced houses,
  - more new market priced housing being developed than affordable housing,
  - farmers are unable to make a profit from selling crops and animals alone
  - the loss of young people from the area to find work
5. Some of the issues will occur in other areas – the latter may come into skills shortages, or the ability of people to find an affordable house (for example) so common themes can be identified.
6. The common themes are then the SA Objectives;
  - Strengthen role of market towns to provide more employment opportunities

- Provide good quality affordable housing
  - Encourage ongoing investment in learning and skills development
  - Use the attractive countryside as an asset in developing the rural economy
7. The objectives can be used to formulate questions for the assessment:
- What effect will this policy have on the balance between market priced housing and affordable housing?
  - Will this policy conserve landscape character?
  - How does this policy support the rural economy?

Please feel free to contact me if you think I can help further.

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