

Executive Summary of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of planning policy documents.

The first stage of the SA was to produce a Local Development Framework (LDF) Scoping Report, which was issued for consultation in February 2006. This identified key sustainability issues in Oxford. 25 sustainability objectives were selected covering a wide variety of environmental, social and economic issues such as flooding, biodiversity, climate change, energy efficiency, waste generation, affordable housing and economic growth.

The second stage is the production of the Sustainability Appraisal Report. A key element of the Sustainability Appraisal Report involves testing the Telecommunications SPD against the SA objectives in order to identify likely positive or negative impacts. The assessment concluded that the Telecommunications SPD should help achieve some of the key SA objectives. These may be social objectives, such as improving the health of the population, by the submission of further information to aid a better understanding of health issues relating to telecommunications. It may be environmental objectives where telecommunications aim to achieve, for example, the protection of the countryside and historic environment. Or it may be economic objectives, for example where the development of the telecommunications network is required that helps to achieve the SA objective 'to sustain economic growth.' The contribution to achievement of these objectives, in some cases, may be relatively small, however the SPD can only expand on already existing policies, and cannot contain new policy requirements.

There are no obvious negative adverse social, environmental or economic impacts. However, as an SPD, the advice cannot have requirements beyond those already set out in policy, or beyond what would be necessary to negotiate for anyway in order to make otherwise unacceptable developments acceptable. Therefore there is no evidence that there will be any conflict between the SPD and sustainability objectives.

The Telecommunications SPD aims to provide further advice on the content necessary for the submission of proposals for new telecommunications equipment proposals, to enable informed consideration to be given to both the visual impact and potential health concerns. The SPD is intended to ensure that operators and the public are directly involved in the decision making process in an open and transparent way, which should promote consistency in decision making and lead to the effective implementation of Local Plan policy. Adopted policy seeks to balance environmental concerns over visual, amenity and perceived health impact with future development of the mobile technology networks.

Monitoring will be important to ensure that any potential unexpected negative effects are identified

The SA concluded that the overall impact of the Telecommunications SPD on the 25 sustainability appraisal objectives is likely to be positive.