

## 13. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

**13.1** PPG12 Development Plans (December 1999) advises that development plans should be drawn up in such a way as to take environmental considerations into account. Over recent years, Government Guidance has become increasingly focused on sustainability issues rather than solely on environmental issues, with environmental concerns subsumed within the wider sustainability context.

**13.2** Sustainability has been placed at the core of the Structure Plan in order to strike an appropriate balance between environmental, social and economic aspirations. The principles of sustainability have formed the objectives of the Structure Plan.

**13.3** The various options for development were appraised against the guiding principles to provide an input into the formulation of the preferred Strategy of the Consultation Draft Structure Plan. The appraisal mechanism and findings are set out in a separate report to that Draft Structure Plan (Shaping the New Worcestershire, Sustainability Appraisal, May 1999).

**13.4** The policies in the Consultation Draft Structure Plan were also formulated and appraised against the guiding principles. The mechanism and findings are contained in the same report mentioned above. The appraisal mechanism enabled each policy in the Structure Plan to be assessed in terms of whether it helps move the County towards or away from sustainability principles and the achievement of the County Vision. Taken together, the individual policy appraisals give an indication as to how successfully the objectives of the Structure Plan are likely to be met. The appraisal also makes transparent where policies in the Structure Plan which are necessary to meet wider Structure Plan objectives are less in keeping with the principles of sustainability. This helps to demonstrate where the trade-offs between the environmental, economic and social

requirements have had to be made and the implications of particular courses of actions. The findings of that appraisal are also set out in the report mentioned above.

**13.5** The sustainability appraisal of the Strategy and policies contained in the Consultation Draft Structure Plan were updated to take account of changes contained in the Deposit Draft Structure Plan. That appraisal mechanism and findings are contained in a separate report to that Deposit Draft Plan (Worcestershire County Structure Plan 1996-2011, Sustainability Appraisal, January 2000).

**13.6** Furthermore, an independent audit of the sustainability appraisal of the Deposit Draft Structure Plan was undertaken by consultants. This was to ensure that the appraisal mechanism and findings of the sustainability appraisal were appropriate, consistent and comprehensive.

**13.7** Following the deposit of, and the Examination in Public (EIP) into, the Deposit Draft Structure Plan, proposed modifications to the Structure Plan were published in February 2001. The EIP Panel recommended that the sustainability appraisal of the Strategy and policies contained in the Deposit Draft Structure Plan should be updated to take account of the most up to date Government advice on sustainability, in particular, the DETR publication, 'A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK' (1999). It was also necessary to review the sustainability appraisal to take on board the proposed modifications to the Deposit Draft Structure Plan.

**13.8** Consultants again undertook an independent audit of the updated sustainability appraisal. This assessment reveals that the appraisal mechanism and findings of the sustainability appraisal are appropriate, consistent and comprehensive.