

Recommended strategic environmental assessment / sustainability appraisal 2006

The following list of recommended SEA/SA reports is organised roughly by the elements of good practice that the reports display: good baseline, scoping generally, alternatives, assessment, participation and consultation, presentation, links to decision-making and other forms of assessment, and other topics.

The methodology for compiling this list was: Riki Therivel e-mailed 208 people in late October 2006, asking for recommendations for good SEAs; sent a reminder a week later; and compiled the responses. No attempt was made to specify in advance what is meant by 'good practice', or to vet the recommendations. Consultants were encouraged to – and often did – recommend reports prepared by their consultancies. The recommender's name is shown in the final column. Lisa Palframan of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds kindly contributed the SEA recommendations that she had been sent to her in response to the RSPB's research into effective SEA. *Inclusion of reports in this list does not mean that they are necessarily SEA Directive compliant, or even that the section being recommended is compliant!*

It is hoped that the reports will give readers ideas for carrying out good SEAs and inspiration for further improving the SEA process. Feel free to share them and use them however you want. Please send any comments and/or your own recommendations to riki@levett-therivel.fsworld.co.uk. This list, with active¹ web-links, is available on www.levett-therivel.co.uk, under 'SEA'.

SA/SEA is particularly good because...	SA/SEA for	Web-link to SA/ environmental report	Recommended by...
Baseline and policy context			
Sound, reasoned assessment with good use of the baseline, used primary data gathering to supplement baseline data	Strood Riverside Draft Development Brief	http://www.medway.gov.uk/strood_riverside_sustainability_report.pdf	Scott D. Johnson, Alex White, Scott Wilson
Baseline data maps and significance of effects assessment	Southampton City Council Core Strategy	http://www.southampton.gov.uk/building-planning/planning/ldf/default.aspx?v-plan-docs/core-strategy/integrated-sustainability.asp	Helen Krzanowski (Southampton City Council)
Good baseline	Ynys Mon LDP	Not yet available, but will be on http://www.anglesey.gov.uk/doc.asp?cat=3076	Alison Brown, CCS
Good use of evidence in the topic based assessment. Use of GIS.	West Midlands Local Transport Plan. Environmental Report	http://westmidlandsstp.gov.uk/default.php?id=1494	Rob Gardner, C4S
Prepared in-house; baseline used is appropriate to AAP level	Upper Heyford AAP	http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/planning/rafupperheyford.cfm	Chris Thom, Cherwell DC Riki Therivel, Levett-Therivel
Concise SEA focussing on key baseline, plans and programmes	North West Regional Assembly, Regional Spatial	http://rpg.nwra.gov.uk/planning/rssappraisal.php	David Kenyon, Clive Harridge, Entec UK

¹ SA/SEA reports often have a fleeting e-life. Working web-link does not mean active web-link!

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	Strategy.		
Identification of sustainability issues; scoping generally			
Good scoping	Wales Transport Strategy	http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/currentconsultation/transcurrcons/wtsconsultation?lang=en	Alison Brown, CCW
Good use of the topic paper approach to SA. Short and easy to read/navigate scoping report.	West Somerset LDF Core Strategy and Williton Area Action Plan Scoping Report	http://www.westsomerset.says.com	Jo Curran / Emma James ENVIRON
SEA being prepared in-house; It has detailed analysis of environmental problems and issues at the scoping stage	Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy (LTS is not yet approved)	http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ACCI/web/site/Sustainability/StrategicLeadership(Sustainability)/sus_SEA.asp	Joseph Somevi, Aberdeenshire Council
Novel/good way of structuring SA objectives	Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (Spatial Devel. Strategy for Greater London)	http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/further-altts/docs/sa-main.pdf	Mansi Segal, LB Hackney
Alternatives			
Clear explanation of alternatives, nicely documented mitigation measures	West End AAP sustainability appraisal	http://www.oxford.gov.uk/planning/sustainability-appraisal.cfm	Riki Therivel, Levett-Therivel
Good consideration of alternatives	Upper Heyford AAP	http://www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk/planning/rafuupperheyford.cfm	Chris Thom, Cherwell DC Riki Therivel, Levett-Therivel
Example of where alternatives had already been chosen and the SA/SEA had to retrospectively assess them. The SA/SEA shows how it can be used for a regeneration site and how SA/SEA can be linked to EIA which was to be subsequently undertaken for the site. It therefore shows the links between the two processes.	South Kilburn SPD, part of Brent LDF	http://www.brent.gov.uk/skilburn.nsf/61b63a407eca7a438025663c0065cadd/8e778cde030b1fa580256fa1003b727c:OpenDocument	Ric Eales, Collingwood Environmental Planning
Assessment			
Site Specific Allocations DPD (Issues and Options): Used a multi tier GIS appraisal methodology to assess each individual site and produce a SA briefing paper for each proposed site. Complete appraisal not only addressed spatial issues through GIS but also assessed the use hierarchy for each site.	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/Planning/localdevelopmentframework/ssa_default.asp	Alex White (Scott Wilson) and, separately, Ric Eales (CEP)

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Provision for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is an important and specialist part of LDFs, requiring a detailed DPD. This addendum provides succinct information to highlight the key issues for this minority group. The addendum has been particularly successful in aiding the assessment of options by enabling a greater focus on effects than would have been provided by the broad LDF Scoping Report, in particular distinct social needs.	South Cambridgeshire District Council, Scoping Addendum Report for a Gypsy and Traveller DPD.	http://www.scambs.gov.uk/documents/retrieve.htm?pk_document=904953	Lewis Hurley (Scott Wilson)
Use of causal chain analysis to help understand the potential for environmental effects arising from local agri-environment schemes and the scope for cumulative effects.	Wales Rural Development Plan	http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/closed/envandcouncloscons/SEA?lang=en	Ric Eales, Collingwood Environmental Planning and, separately, Rob Gardner, C4S
Assesses the transport effects of the plan before linking this into the environmental effects, good use of evidence.	Cornwall Local Transport Plan. Environmental Report.	http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=29812	Rob Gardner, C4S
Systematic and simple approach to the assessment of different levels of options including over 40 site assessments.	Bedfordshire Minerals Local Development Framework Issues and Options Appraisal	http://www.environmentcommunication.co.uk/MWDF-SA.htm	Jo Curran / Emma James ENVIRON
SEA prepared in-house; has a good analysis of options; SEA methodology influenced economic impact analysis and health & social impact assessment.	Aberdeen City Local Transport Strategy (LTS is not yet approved)	http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ACCI/web/site/Sustainability/StrategicLeadership(Sustainability)/sus_SEA.asp	Joseph Somevi, Aberdeenshire Council
Good use of radar diagram to describe cumulative impacts	Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London)	http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/further-alt/docs/sa-main.pdf	Mansi Segal, LB Hackney
Review of greenhouse gas emissions in the region and opportunities for the draft RSS to reduce them inputted to the SA and resulted in some important changes to draft RSS in response.	South West RSS	http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/ngcontent.cfm?a_id=836	Ric Eales, Collingwood Environmental Planning
Robustly assesses policies, strategic development areas and individual sites proposed for development.	Final Sustainability Appraisal Report (October 2006) for Bracknell Forest Core	http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/environment/env-planning-and-development/env-planning-policy/env-local-development-	Melissa Read, Bracknell Forest Borough Council

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	Strategy DPD.	framework/subbackground	
It uses the Sustainability Threshold Assessment colour-rating scheme to assess sustainability effects; highlights key sustainability issues and cumulative impacts arising from development in an area facing rapid change.	Dartford Borough Council LDF- SA of Core Strategy.	http://www.dartford.gov.uk/planningpolicy/CoreStrategy.htm	Enfusion
It includes recommendations for best practice sustainability targets in Sherford New Community, including 50% on-site renewables.	South Hams District Council LDF- SA of Sherford Area Action Plan.	http://www.southhams.gov.uk/old_index/residents_index/ksp_development_and_planning/ksp_development_and_planning-forward/sp-forward_planning-local_development_framework/sherford/sp-forward_planning-sherford_area_action_plan.htm	Enfusion
The EAE of PEIT not focus first and foremost on transport activity effects, but the EAE try to determine and assess the environmental effects and consequences of strategic alternatives at the work decision level of the PEIT as transport planning. It's because that, the methodological approach corresponds to the System Analysis and is based in the conceptual modeling of the system, which try to assess the functional relationships between three components: the political instruments, the elements of the system, and the environmental effects and consequences of the System Transport-Environment-Territory. In the modelling the spatial elements have a very important relevancy due to the essentials implications in the system transport and in the environment.	STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURES AND TRANSPORT PLAN IN SPAIN (PEIT)	http://peit.cedex.es/; http://www.fomento.es/MFOM/LANG_CASTELLANO/ESPECIALES/PORTUFUTUROHOY/	Rodrigo Jiliberto (TAU Consultora Ambiental)
Consultation/participation			
Emphasis on consultation, preparation of a series of topic papers to inform the baseline.	Bedfordshire Minerals Local Development Framework Scoping Report.	http://www.environment.co.uk/MWDF-SA.htm	Jo Curran / Emma James ENVIRON
Employed complementary	Strood Riverside	http://www.medway.gov	Scott D. Johnson,

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working to ensure capacity building within the Council	Draft Development Brief	.uk/strood_riverside_sustainability_report.pdf	Alex White Scott Wilson
Country-wide consultation and good level of participation (though not always accurately reflected in final document)	Ghana	epa.gov.gh/SEA/index.html (but site still under construction)	Farida Shaikh (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)
Good stakeholder involvement, with a steering group set up and consulted at every stage of the SEA, also a website to help keep people up to date with what's happening.	Scottish Marine Renewables SEA	http://www.seaenergyscotland.co.uk/	
Presentation and non-technical summary			
Clear NTS. Use of GIS.	West Midlands Local Transport Plan. Environmental Report	http://westmidlandsltp.gov.uk/default.php?id=1494	Rob Gardner, C4S
Provides a non-technical summary of the Scoping Report which is accessible, easy to read and provides a good platform to engage consultees.	Havant Borough Council. Non-Technical Summary of Scoping Report	http://www.havant.gov.uk/PDF/Scoping%20Report%20NTS%20(A4)%20-%20post-consultation.pdf	Phill Minas Pete Davis Entec UK
It is clearly written and detailed	Initial Sustainability Assessment (incorporating an SEA) Bracknell Forest Borough – full report, June 2005	http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk	Anastássios Perdicoúlis
It is clearly written and detailed; good use of GIS to identify conflicts and synergies	Buckinghamshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011	http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/transport_plan/ltp2 http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/transport_plan/LTP2/A5_SEA.doc.pdf	Anastássios Perdicoúlis; Lisa Palframan, RSPB
It is clearly written and detailed	Lancashire Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report, March 2005	http://www.fabermaunsell.com	Anastássios Perdicoúlis
It is clearly written and detailed	Strategic Environmental Assessment for the West Sussex Local Transport Plan: Scoping Report, June 2004	(no evidence in the document)	Anastássios Perdicoúlis
Easily understandable	Southampton	http://www.southampto	Nick Pincombe

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narrative, clearly explained effects, concise and effective recommendations.	City Council Core Strategy	n.gov.uk/building-planning/planning/ldf/default-plan-docs/core-strategy/integrated-sustainability.asp	(Halcrow / Tesseract Environmental)
Concise Environmental Report with a set of succinct appraisal matrices.	Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), Regional Economic Strategy	http://www.nwda.co.uk/RelatedContent.aspx?area=100 (see archive of supporting documentation)	Phill Minas Dave Kenyon Entec UK
Makes use of Limehouse Publishing (online)	Poole Town Centre North Area Action Plan (Preferred Options)	http://www.boroughofpoole.com/docs.asp?act_doc=display_doc&id=193	Mike Garrity, Borough of Poole
Links to plan-making process			
SEA has substantially reshaped the Local Transport Strategy	Aberdeenshire Local Transport Strategy	http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/transportation/lts/index.asp	Joseph Somevi, Aberdeenshire Council
Nicely focused on the SPD and its requirements	Cardiff Green Strategy	?	Riki Therivel, Levett-Therivel
Prepared in-house and the SA is very integrated with the decision-making process.	Final Sustainability Appraisal Report (October 2006) for Bracknell Forest Core Strategy DPD.	http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/environment/env-planning-and-development/env-planning-policy/env-local-development-framework/subbackground	Melissa Read, Bracknell Forest Borough Council
The SA, whilst led by consultants, attempted to involve the council's officers in the appraisal throughout, by using appraisal pro-formas and workshops for example, to ensure the SA had the greatest possible influence over the evolving Core Strategy.	Brent Core Strategy Preferred Options	http://www.brent.gov.uk/planning.nsf/013459d30f2ad00680256623005fcc0a/44465828647ed0b78025721b006013e3!OpenDocument	Ric Eales, Collingwood Environmental Planning
Makes use of Dorset SEA Group for key stakeholder engagement	Poole Town Centre North Area Action Plan (Preferred Options)	http://www.boroughofpoole.com/docs.asp?act_doc=display_doc&id=193	Mike Garrity, Borough of Poole
Effective in influencing the plan - some real improvements have been made to the AAP as a result of SEA eg commitment to a 50% target for the development's energy requirements being met by renewables, requirements for water conservation measures and a requirement for a biodiversity strategy to be prepared.	SA / SEA of South Hams LDF, including the Area Action Plan for Sherford New Community -	http://www.southhams.gov.uk/sa_report_sherford_aap_final_19june06_ready_to_print.pdf	Lisa Palframan, RSPB
Good range of mitigation	SEA of	http://www.buckscc.gov	Lisa Palframan,

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measures recommended by the SEA which were adopted.	Buckinghamshire County Council Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011	.uk/transport_plan/LTP2/A5_SEA.doc.pdf	RSPB
Assessment included several formal assessment rounds and several rapid assessments, which gave almost immediate feedback to the planners. SEA report shows clear influence of SA / SEA on the RSS	Yorkshire and Humber draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)	http://www.yhassembly.gov.uk/p_contentDocs/884_1.pdf	
Propose a simple methodology supported by pilot experiences. Shows clear links to plan-making process.	Guidelines on environmental assessment of plans and programmes ENPLAN Project Interreg III B Medoc	In Spanish: www.interreg-enplan.org/linee3_es.htm In Catalan: www.interreg-enplan.org/linee3_cat.htm In Italian: www.interreg-enplan.org/linee3.htm	Pietro Caratti
Links to other forms of assessment			
Good integration between SA/SEA and appropriate assessment	Southampton City Council Core Strategy	http://www.southampton.gov.uk/building-planning/planning/ldf/default-plan-docs/core-strategy/integrated-sustainability.asp	Nick Pincombe (Halcrow / Tesserae Environmental)
Incorporates Health Impact and Equalities Impact	Poole Town Centre North Area Action Plan (Preferred Options)	http://www.boroughofpoole.com/docs.asp?act_doc=display_doc&id=193	Mike Garrity, Borough of Poole
Good links to regional-level assessment	South Hams Core Strategy	http://www.southhams.gov.uk/revised_sustainability_report.pdf	Sangsoo Mun, Oxford Brookes University
SEA statement			
The Statement provides a good audit trail of how the LTP has taken into account the findings of the SEA.	Wiltshire Local Transport Plan. SEA Statement	http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/sea-2006-c4s-statement.pdf	Rob Gardner, C4S
Early example of an SEA statement; tells an interesting story	Kent County Council Local Transport Plan	http://www.kent.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/18971F5F-47CB-4137-ACE5-6C9C48918D70/0/app8_seastatement.pdf	Riki Therivel, Levett-Therivel
Other			
One of the first SEAs of an SPG under the new Scottish Act. Strengths are how it has dealt with the emerging legislation and with the relationship between project and strategic level impacts.	Carltongate SPG SEA	http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/environment/planning_buildings_i_i/planning/planning_policies/development_frameworks%20and_strategies/CEC_caltongate_masterplan	Jo Curran / Maeve Fryday ENVIRON
Generally good work	Caerphilly	?	Alison Brown, CCW

Other comments:

Martin Slater: *I don't have any particular SEAs/SA to recommend this year. The SAs we have seen this year from our local planning authorities are routine examples following the ex-ODPM guidance and not much more, although there are some interesting examples of the use of scenario testing emerging. Conversely, the draft plans themselves are quite good with very good emerging policies on a range of issues, eg climate change, flood risk, biodiversity, energy efficiency etc. See Wakefield's draft Core Strategy as an example of this. Does this add weight to my subversive theory that you do not need a good SEA/SA to have a good plan outcome?*

I am hoping that Leeds will produce a good SA in 07 for their Core Strategy, otherwise nothing good to report from here."

Angus Morrison-Saunders, Murdoch University: *"Alas I have no inspiring SEAs from this part of the world [Australia] that are worthy of sharing! I am currently writing a paper with Ross Marshall that lambasts our 'so-called' SEAs over here..."*

Owen White, Owen White Associates: *"haven't come across any 'stand-out' SEAs recently."*

Lisa Palframan, RSPB: *"In terms of good practice more generally, I like West of Scotland SEA group - 15 or so local authority SEA people and planners who get together informally once a quarter to debate and exchange ideas. Good example of peer support - exchanging best practice should help improve quality of SEA. More details from Antony McGuinness at Ayrshire Council (Chair)"*