

Appendix B- ATCAAP Preferred Options Appraisal Results

Assessment of the Preferred Options Approach for the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan.

The appraisal was undertaken using the SA matrix developed at the start of the SA process. The ATCAAP preferred options were scored against their potential compliance with the SA objectives. The predicted impact and key assumptions are set out in the appraisal comments column and brief recommendations made in the final column. The full appraisal results are set out in the matrix below.

Key:

++	Significant positive effect	?	Effect uncertain
+	Positive effect	-	Negative effect
0	Neutral (no effect)	--	Significant negative effect

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medm	Long		
Protection of the Environment	Enhancement of biodiversity & improvement of habitat richness		?	?	<p>The preferred options approach has been designed to avoid impacts where possible on areas of biodiversity value.</p> <p>The expansion of the town centre (particularly southwards) and redevelopment of under-used town centre sites and construction of Park and Ride and Park and Walk sites could lead to development of sites that may have biodiversity value.</p> <p>One area of uncertainty relates to impact on the river corridors which all have ecological significance, however, the TCAAP preferred approach seeks to avoid breaks into these systems.</p> <p>Biodiversity will also benefit from secondary effects of anticipated less traffic.</p>	<p>A future issue is how the wider areas around the river corridors are to be managed in the future.</p> <p>Ensure that the permeability of green corridors/habitat linkages are not damaged and where opportunities exist for creation of new habitat linkages or green corridors it is recommended that these are implemented.</p> <p>Design mitigation e.g. the use of green bridges, tunnels should also be implemented</p>

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
					<p>Opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement have been encouraged e.g. proposed Emerald Necklace- the preferred approach recognises that due to the extent of town centre expansion and the size of associated development that habitat creation and landscape/open space enhancement will be needed. Memorial Square offers the opportunity to create a new public space.</p>	<p>Detailed plan for Green Structure is required-including its role and purpose.</p>
	Improved linkages between existing and/ or proposed areas of semi-natural habitat		++	++	<p>The preferred approach provides a significant opportunity for the promotion of linkages between habitats, specifically through the river corridors and the Emerald Necklace, which runs through and starts in the town centre and links. The Emerald Necklace acts as a 'green corridor' linking numerous green spaces, including Victoria Park and the river corridors south of the town.</p>	<p>Opportunities for green bridges should be explored- these would be built in same way as conventional bridges but would include a layer of top-soil and a footpath or bridleway could be at the centre of the bridge but the side would hold hedgerows/trees, this would allow for increased pedestrian access but would also create green corridors.</p> <p>Issues around the use of the land safeguarded for the construction of the final Victoria Way alignment to</p>

Appendix B- ATCAAP Preferred Options Appraisal Results

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
					connect the Tank roundabout- how will it be used in the interim. Scope for managing with a view to create/enhancing biodiversity value.	
	Maintain and enhance the quality of Ashford's landscape		?	?	<p>The preferred options perform well against this criterion. Respecting Ashford's local character is a key consideration of the preferred approach. The development proposals respect and are sensitive to building heights of the surrounding areas, as well as protecting the views to St. Mary's Church and the historic character of the town centre. Seeking to locate the taller buildings on lower ground will reduce visual intrusion on the surrounding landscape. It is important to protect and enhance Ashford's landscape/townscape as it acts as an important lure for new residents and businesses.</p> <p>The two proposed Park and Ride sites could have an adverse visual impact on their immediate surroundings and consume large areas of greenfield.</p>	<p>The preferred options land use map shows that mitigation measures in relation to visual intrusion have been incorporated into the AAP, including tree planting along the edge of the Commercial and Southern Expansion Quarter's</p> <p>It is unclear from the preferred approach the precise location of the taller office buildings, if not sensitively located could have detrimental visual impact on the views of the historic town centre and the countryside, however the topography of the area is likely to ameliorate this. It is important to protect and</p>

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
					enhance Ashford's landscape/townscape as it acts as an important lure for new residents and businesses.	
	Avoid adverse impacts of sites of heritage importance		+	+	<p>The regeneration of the town centre could involve the redevelopment/disturbance of known or undiscovered cultural heritage resources. It is unclear from the preferred approach the extent to which the 107 Listed Buildings and their settings located within Ashford's historic core have been protected/ incorporated into the preferred approach. However, the preferred option report does seek to respect the views of St. Mary's Church and the historic areas of the High Street and North Street by limiting the height of new buildings to 3-5 storeys.</p> <p>Widespread improvements to public realm will improve quality of the built environment.</p> <p>Proposals to reduce traffic/ encourage modal shift will be beneficial for the setting of cultural heritage features.</p>	<p>The final AAP should include a policy seeking to ensure that future developers would be required to submit desk studies for their sites. If these studies reveal any remains of relevance then trial trenches would be required in these particular areas of search prior to development.</p>

Appendix B- ATCAAP Preferred Options Appraisal Results

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
	Atmospheric integrity and air quality	-	+	+	<p>Transport is a key source of pollutants to air. The LDF seeks to promote alternatives to the car and public transport efficiency is a key consideration of the preferred approach, with the development of Ashford's SMARTLINK- a new bus-based public transport system offering high frequency services across the Borough and into the town centre. The anticipated increased modal share of public transport will be key in reducing emissions. Anticipated reduction in greenhouse gas emissions due to less car based journeys</p> <p>The preferred options report seeks a balance between restricting traffic flows and improved accessibility to the town centre. The development of a strategic east-west link road (Victoria Way) and the proposed Park and Ride scheme will help reduce congestion and consequently reduce emissions.</p> <p>The strategy of applying high parking standards in the short term for employment, retail and leisure development, until the introduction of</p>	<p>Further elaboration of the cycle and pedestrian networks is required.</p> <p>Due to development areas high accessibility and central location car free development could be considered. Preferred approach could promote the reduction in car use by increasing car-free and car-reduced housing developments.</p> <p>Future Car Parking Strategy will need to prioritise the parking needs of disabled people, local residents, suppliers of goods and services, businesses and their customers, and restrict on-street parking.</p>

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
					<p>SMARTLINK services and the Park and Ride schemes could make driving a more attractive option. However, lower maximum standards will be applied</p> <p>The AAP also promotes mixed use and higher density development that will widen people's choice as to whether or not to travel by car.</p>	
Social Progress	Thriving mixed use development		++	++	<p>Mixed use development is a key theme underpinning the Commercial Quarter, the Town Centre Core, Southern Expansion Quarter, International Station Quarter and Memorial Square Quarter, which consists of mixed-use schemes with residential development and commercial, retail and leisure uses.</p>	Loft-type work-live units should be promoted.
	Mix of housing types and tenure		?	?	<p>Mix of housing types and tenure is not a consideration within the preferred approach. Housing stock diversity is highlighted in RPG9 as a key issue. Section 12.64, (11) states, "New opportunities will need to be sought to diversify the towns housing stock especially in and around the centre to accommodate new urban lifestyles."</p>	<p>Desired housing types and tenure should be outlined. E.g. public/private housing, apartments, high-density low-rise etc.</p> <p>Affordable housing provision requires consideration.</p>

Appendix B- ATCAAP Preferred Options Appraisal Results

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
						Provision of work-live units should be promoted
Prudent use of natural resources	Maximise the potential of Brownfield land		++	++	The preferred approach positively contributes to this criterion as all proposed development will occur on previously developed land	
	Densities in excess of PPG3 (PPS3) standards		?	?	Overall density of development has not been considered. The report merely states that 'comparatively higher densities' will be sought in the Victoria Way area.	Full details of the required residential/employment density should be provided
	Ability to withstand impacts of climate change (drought/flooding)		+	+	<p>The preferred approach scores well under this objective, Preferred Option TC1: Town Centre Guiding Principles encourages best practice schemes incorporating energy-efficient design, water efficiency and waste minimisation.</p> <p>Preferred Option TC13: Managing change and delivering sustainable, high quality design considers energy efficiency. All development in the town centre will be required to meet appropriate EcoHomes and BREEAM standards.</p>	<p>Local generation of heat and power (for example through community heating schemes, CHP etc.) should be considered and measures to promote energy efficiency should be included as part of the final AAP and future Design Codes.</p> <p>It is recognised that the preferred approach considers energy efficiency but it is considered that</p>

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
					<p>The options report does not promote design for more extreme climatic events however climate change has been considered in relation to flood risk.</p> <p>Promoting public transport has positive effect on climate change- reduction in greenhouse gas emissions due to less car based journeys,</p>	<p>designing for climate change should be considered in more detail and should be a key element of building design. In particular the AAP should address and include recommendations/ proposals in relation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing with nature; • Energy efficient air conditioning and retrofitting. • Local generation of heat and power (for example through community heating schemes, CHP etc.) • Design measures (such as shelter belts, shaded outdoor areas, high reflectivity external surfaces, maximizing solar gain and maximizing absorptive surfaces); and • Reducing per capita water consumption.

Appendix B- ATCAAP Preferred Options Appraisal Results

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
	Development at risk from flooding	?	?	?	<p>The preferred options report does not outline the specific location of town centre residential development so impacts on floodrisk areas is unknown at this stage.</p> <p>The preferred option approach will potentially involve development within floodrisk areas, which could reduce flood storage capacity levels.</p> <p>Increased urban run off due to climate change will need to be managed as storm run off could exacerbate flooding through the town centre. ⁽¹⁾ states this can be managed through channel improvements and local bank raising.</p>	<p>The final AAP should state that TC development areas next to the Great Stour and downstream of the Stour confluence should be designed to have no overall impact on floodplain storage.</p>
	Protection and enhancement and surface waters	--	--	?	<p>The preferred approach makes no reference to groundwater protection, this is a serious emission given that there is potential risk of contamination to watercourses and groundwater during site works and after redevelopment.</p>	<p>Promote creation of wetland sites/habitats, SUDs</p>

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
Economic Growth	Improve Ashford's economic performance & contribution to regional competitiveness	+	++	++	<p>The preferred approach supports employment growth in terms of the provision of space/premises for employment uses in key accessible locations. The AAP proposes 94,500 sq.m. of retail/leisure floorspace and 76,500 sq.m. of new office space in the town centre by 2021.</p> <p>The CQ is the largest development quarter in terms of employment floorspace within the town centre. Mixed-use development is promoted through the provision of up to 40,000 sq.m of office floorspace by 2021, residential development along the river and above ground floor on Station road and small retail. The CQ provides a choice for people to work locally and have a positive impact on the town centre vitality.</p> <p>Access to the CQ will be significantly enhanced through the proposed realignment of Dover Place and Junction works between Station Road and Elwick Road, this will have positive benefits on air quality, accessibility and congestion.</p>	<p>The final AAP should state how linkages between open spaces will be promoted through the CQ and how these will be integrated into the proposed Emerald Necklace and to the new public open space in the Memorial Square Quarter.</p> <p>The final AAP should include measures to encourage commercial, retail/leisure developments to incorporate landscaping, public open spaces and the use of porous hard surfacing- which can help reduce localised flooding.</p> <p>It appears that cycle links connecting the development quarters and the town centre and other opportunity areas are absent. A clear diagram illustrating the cycle routes around the town centre and opportunity areas would be useful.</p>

Appendix B- ATCAAP Preferred Options Appraisal Results

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
					<p>The remaining office space is split between the town centre core (8,500 sq.m), the Southern Expansion Quarter (12,000 sq.m), the International Station Quarter (9,700 sq.m) and the Memorial Square Quarter (6,000 sq.m).</p>	
	Balance between employment and housing growth	?	?	?	<p>The preferred approach underlines the importance of creating a balance between housing, employment, social, educational and community facilities which will ensure that residents will have the opportunity to live-work-participate in recreation within the town centre as well as improving the skills base of Ashford's population.</p> <p>At present the phasing plan only states if development will occur before 2021 or 2031. A more detailed plan is required to ensure an equal balance between employment and housing but it is recognised that there are wider residential opportunities elsewhere in the Borough.</p> <p>The AAP promotes mixed-use development throughout the town centre area but the AAP could identify the opportunity to provide live-work units and measures to encourage home working.</p>	<p>A more detailed phasing plan is required.</p> <p>Provision of affordable housing should be given consideration as will help secure a mixed and balanced town centre.</p>

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
	To enable a variety of quality employment opportunities in Ashford		++	++	<p>The employment areas within the town centre, will provide for predominately small-medium scale buildings for commercial and retail/leisure use. Mixed-use development is also promoted throughout the town centre as well as identifying the opportunity for small retail units in the Commercial Quarter.</p> <p>The preferred approach significantly contributes to developing the knowledge economy and life long learning through the proposed Learning Campus and the Discovery Centre, which provides facilities for adult education, library and an information centre.</p> <p>The proposed community facilities will provide for further employment opportunities.</p> <p>The preferred approach includes provision of a major venue building, new hotel, conference centre. Which will help contribute to the tourism industry. The SMARTLINK and park and ride will form links between the railway and bus stations which in turn will encourage further bus and rail use and consequently encourage people to visit Ashford.</p>	

Appendix B- ATCAAP Preferred Options Appraisal Results

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
Transport	To facilitate modal shift	?	?	?	<p>The preferred approach seeks a balance between minimising peak-hour traffic flows and the need to encourage ease of access to the town centre. The AAP options report promotes alternatives to the car, through the SMARTLINK bus services, two Park and Ride sites at the Warren and Waterbrook and Park and Walk sites. It also promotes mixed use development which will reduce the demand for travel. Provision of employment land, education, social and leisure facilities in the town centre will help reduce the demand for travel.</p> <p>However the development of Victoria Way, provision of three multi-story car parks and short term high parking standards could encourage people to use the car instead of public transport.</p>	<p>The cycling and pedestrian networks should be promoted in the final AAP.</p> <p>Space needs to be provided for cyclists on the proposed Victoria Way and the reconfigured Ring Road.</p>
	Public access to green space	?	+	+	<p>Access to open space has increased through the proposed area of public open space at Memorial Square and anticipated increased accessibility to Victoria Park.</p> <p>The river corridors and proposed Emerald Necklace offer a fantastic opportunity to provide public open space through out the town centre.</p>	<p>Detail plans for a Green Structure should be included.</p> <p>Proposals to improve access between the development area and the existing Victoria Park are missing.</p>

Theme	Sustainability Criteria	Effect on Environment			Appraisal Comments	Mitigation Proposals/Recommendations
		Short	Medium	Long		
					The AAP preferred options report does not include a clear strategy for these open spaces.	Details on the proposed Emerald Necklace are completely lacking (e.g. its elements- green corridors, trees, open space etc.)