



Infrastructure Working Group

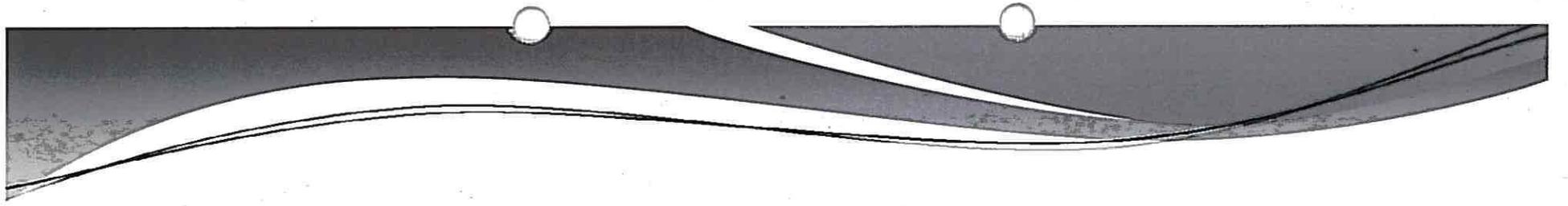
15 July 2014

Addressing Social Concerns
in the Local Plan



Ways in which social issues are evaluated

- Sustainability Appraisal
- Consequences Study
- Health Impact Assessment
- Equalities Impact Assessment



Sustainability Appraisal



Sustainability Appraisal

What is it and why?

The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is 'to promote sustainable development through the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations in the preparation of Local Plans'.

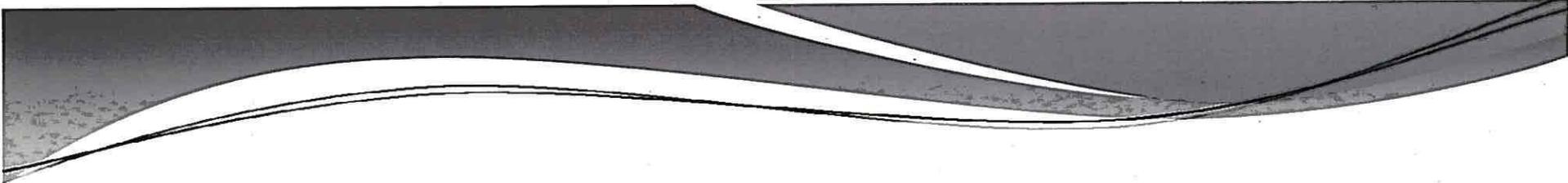
Sustainability appraisal of Local Plan documents is required by Government [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004] to ensure that plans contribute to the statutory objective of achieving sustainable development.



what it is all about?

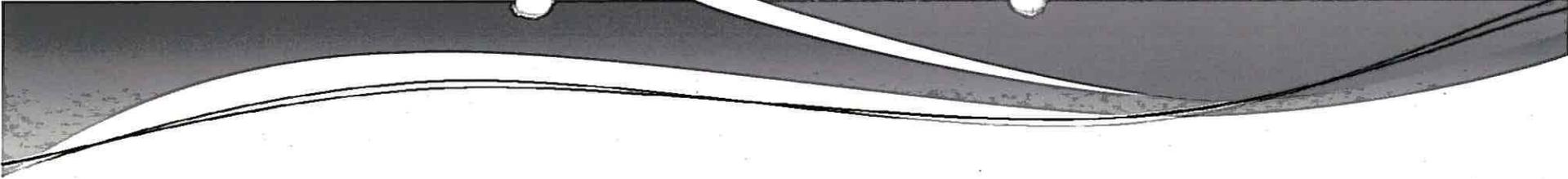
- Sounder plans
- More sustainable plans
- Better decisions
- More sustainable patterns and forms of development
- Ultimately, it is about:

“Good planning”



Stages

- Stage A – Setting the Scope
- Stage B – Developing options and alternatives and assessing effects
- Stage C – Prepare Sustainability Appraisal Report
- Stage D – Make available for comment and submit



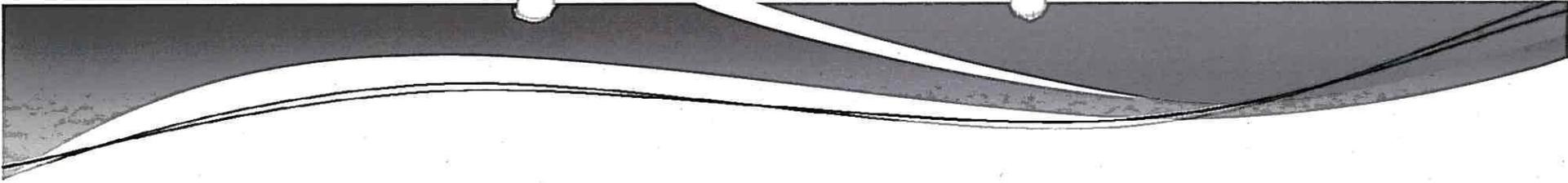
Stage A Scoping Report

- Looking at data and other information across Sefton to determine what are the key economic, environmental and social issues
- Develop these issues into a list of ‘Sustainability Objectives’
- Consult with statutory consultees and the wider public on these issues and objectives
- Make changes in response to comments



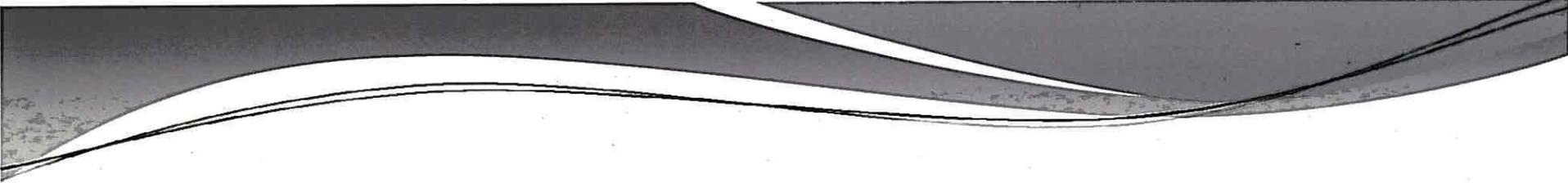
What were the key issues in Sefton?

- Although relatively affluent [compared to others NW metropolitan LAs] there remains pockets of deprivation.
- High levels of unemployment in certain areas, notably Bootle and Netherton
- Lowest amount of available employment land in Merseyside. Low level of jobs in borough.
- Good skills and education levels but areas that lag behind
- High commuter levels



key issues [2]

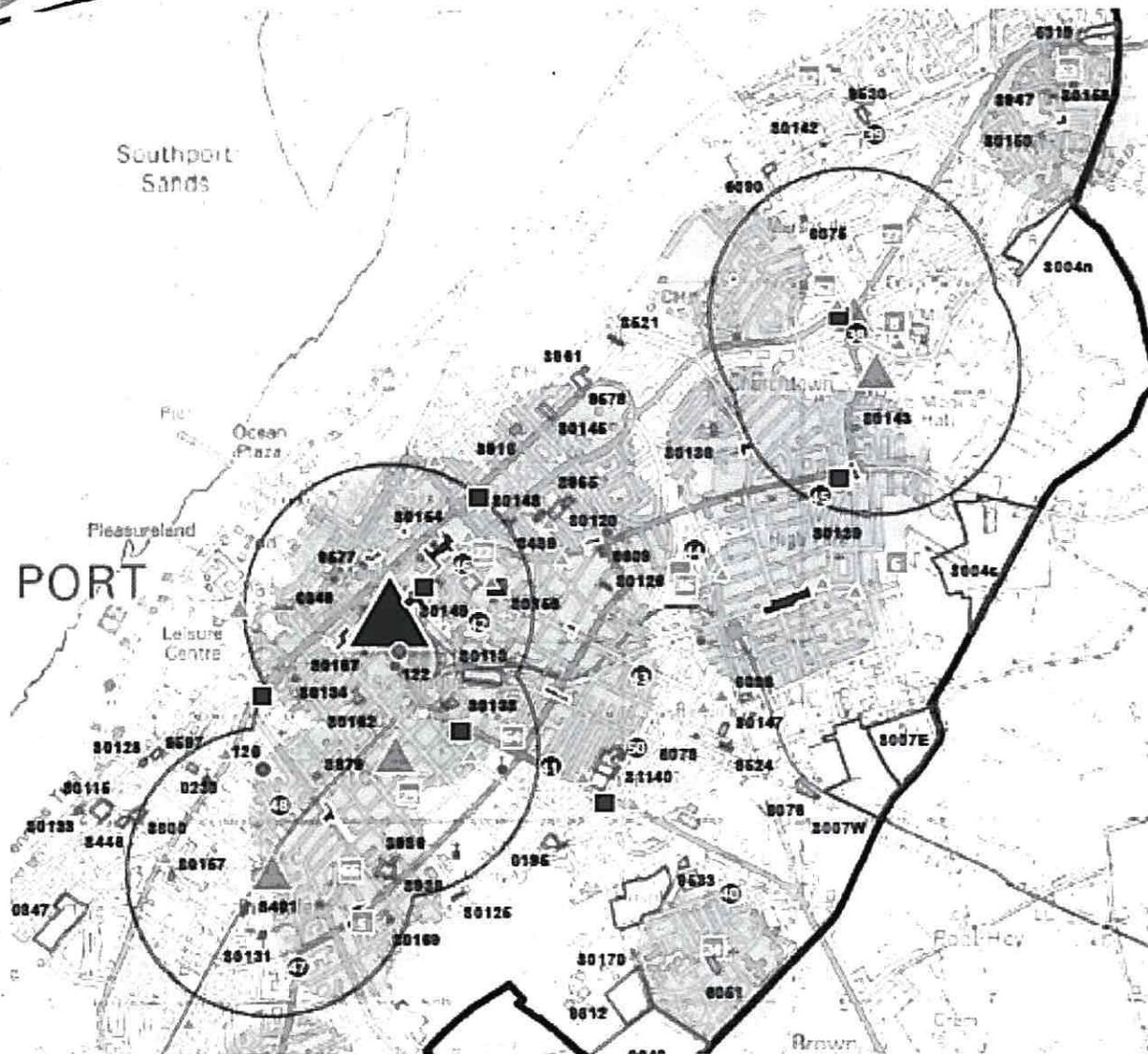
- High levels of obesity although good levels of sports and leisure participation
- Significant proportion of people living with limiting long-term illnesses
- House prices amongst the highest in region. Limited supply of affordable homes in certain areas
- About one third of households have no car, although public transport is seen as good north-south [not as good east-west]



key issues [3]

- Sefton has an excellent environment [coast, natural habitats, countryside, good quality agricultural land]
- Flat character of Sefton means that parts of the borough have a higher risk of flooding
- Environmental and geographic restrictions severely limit choice in areas for growth

Using mapping to identify potential issues – social infrastructure in Southport



Proximity to Services and Facilities

Types of services and facilities we have looked at include:

- Bus stops and train stations
- Local centres and shopping parades
- GPs and Health centres
- Primary Schools
- Parks
- Primary route network



Stage A in Sefton

- Scoping Report originally written and consulted on in 2009
- Refresh was undertaken in December 2012 to take account of new data and comments made during 2011 consultation
- List of twenty Sustainability Objectives have been identified covering the range of economic, environmental and social issues



Sefton's List of Sustainability Objectives

Economic

- Encourage economic growth and investment
- Reduce unemployment and improve skills
- Support the rural economy
- Maintain vibrant town, local and village centres
- Provide the required infrastructure to support growth



Sefton's List of Sustainability Objectives

Environmental

- Adapt and mitigate to climate change
- Reduce the risk from flooding
- Reduce pollution
- Reduce waste and the use of natural resources
- Protect Sefton's valued landscape, coast and countryside
- Bring back into use derelict and underused land and buildings
- Protect and enhance biodiversity
- Protect and enhance Sefton's culture and heritage



Sefton's List of Sustainability Objectives

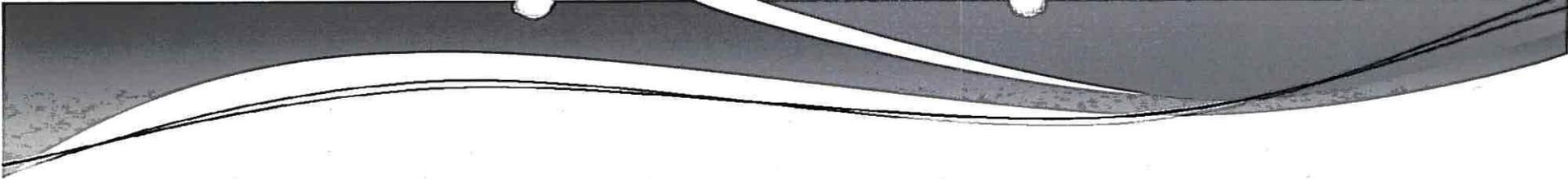
Social

- Reduce inequalities and social deprivation
- Reduce crime and improve safety
- Meet Sefton's diverse housing needs
- Provide better access to services and facilities, particularly by walking, cycling and public transport
- Provide environments that improve health and social care
- Strengthen communities and help people to be involved in local-decision making
- Provide a quality living environment



Stage B – Developing and assessing options

- Develop the Local Plan Options including reasonable alternatives
- Evaluate the likely the effects of the Local Plan and alternatives
- Consider ways of mitigating effects and maximising benefits
- Propose measures to monitor the significant effects
- Consult on emerging findings



Key findings – Preferred Option

- Scores well for the economic objectives, providing land for business growth and jobs
- Helps to maintain Sefton's population in line with current trends. This will help support services.
- Increase in the number of affordable homes that we currently provide
- Loss of countryside to development and increase use of resources. Loss of agricultural land. Flood risk.
- Increased car use likely if not supported by public transport. Pollution.

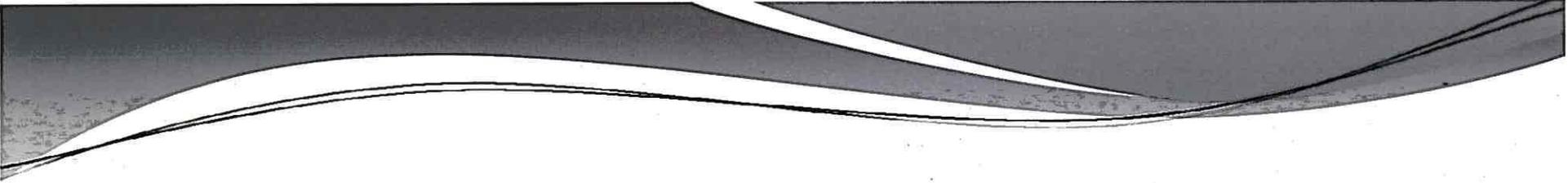


How policies are improved by the Sustainability Appraisal process

- The Local Plan as a whole should be subject to appraisal rather than policy by policy
- Each of the 20 sustainability objectives are considered
- Nevertheless the appraisal presents an opportunity to improve individual policies to help ensure more sustainable development
- Draft Local Plan policies [‘Preferred Option Stage’] were subject to Sustainability Appraisal
- Emerging policies of the Local Plan will be subject to a further appraisal – URS to lead.



Consequences Study

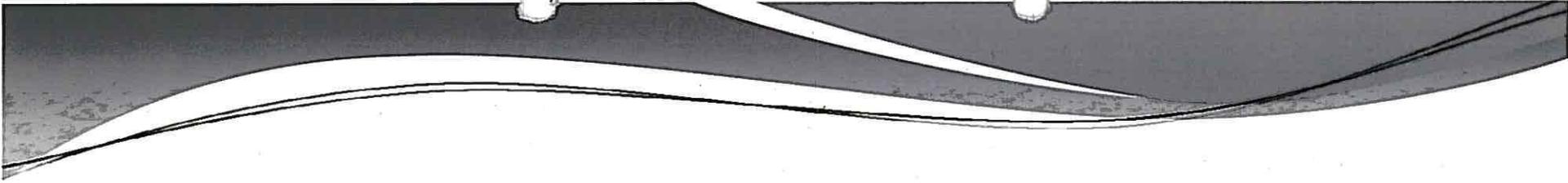


Purpose of Consequences Study

- NLP were appointed in February 2013 to undertake a study of the 'consequences' of Sefton choosing different options in its Local Plan.

'assesses the anticipated consequences, in social, economic and environmental terms, of Sefton Council choosing to pursue one of three Local Plan development options'

- Similar in scope to Sustainability Appraisal but concentrated on the strategic issues and primarily concerned with more direct planning issues.

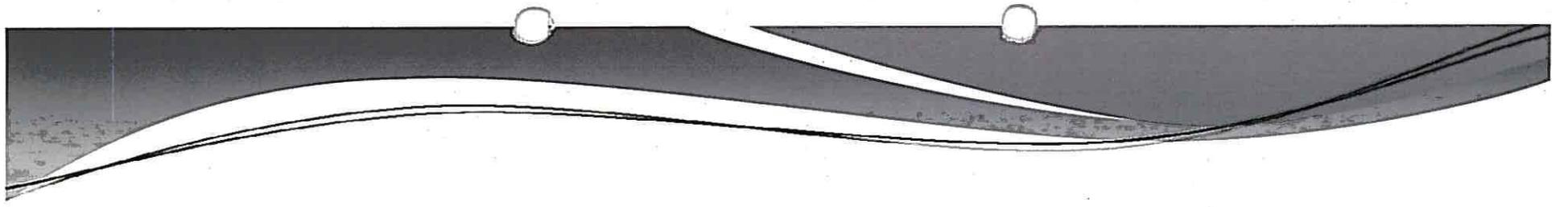


Conclusions for Preferred Option

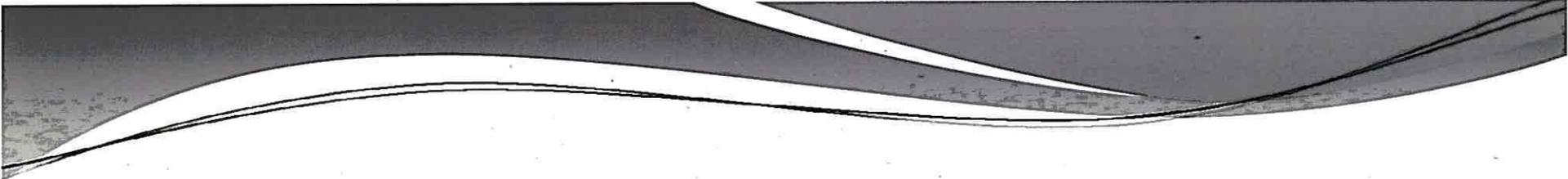
- Will provide for a level of homes that meets Sefton's objectively assessed needs.
- Would go some way in securing affordable homes, particularly in areas with highest need [Southport, Formby, Maghull]
- Would provide around 49ha of new employment land. This could support between 3,720 – 3,920 new jobs in businesses on these sites.
- In addition, the construction of the additional homes could support approx 1300 direct FE jobs in the construction industry and up to a further 2000 FE jobs in other related industries

Conclusions for Preferred Option [cont'd]

- This option could also require significant investment in social infrastructure, in particular: additional school places; GP surgeries; retail services and green infrastructure.
- Would generate significant contributions to support infrastructure and other programmes
- The release of a number of Green Belt sites would result in the loss of some Grades 1 – 3a agricultural land in parts of Southport, Crosby and Maghull/Lydiate and Aintree and require land within Flood Zone 2 to be developed.



Health Impact Assessment



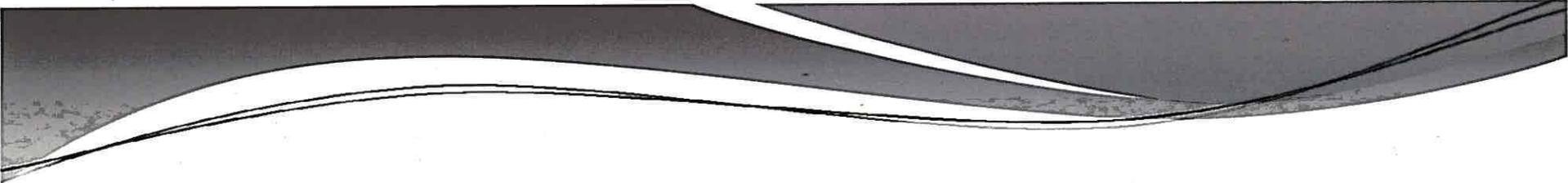
HIA – what is it?

- The links between physical environmental conditions and human health and wellbeing are increasingly prevalent.
- A Health Impact Assessment, whilst not statutory, is a useful tool to ensure that development will have a positive impact as far as possible on the health of the local population.
- Sefton's Public Health Team were engaged to assist in appraising the emerging Local Plan at an early stage to 'flag up' any areas of possible concern.
- Used a comprehensive list of health indicators and considered the possible impact the Local Plan would have.

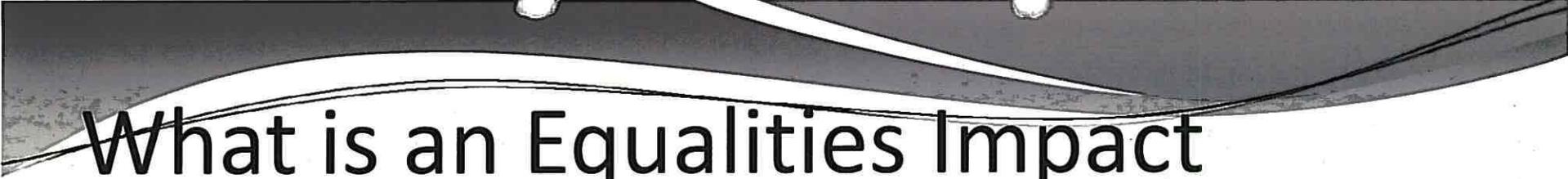


Some of the key findings and recommendations of the HIA included:

- The provision of homes and jobs is key in helping reduce health inequalities.
- Providing places for people to exercise, both formally or informally, is important
- Looking at ways to reduce reliance on car should be explored, particularly for children
- Local Plan should consider restricting 'unhealthy uses', e.g. fast food takeaways, betting shops
- Support local centres and shopping parades to prevent 'food deserts'
- Consider health impacts at planning application stage when detailed proposals are known

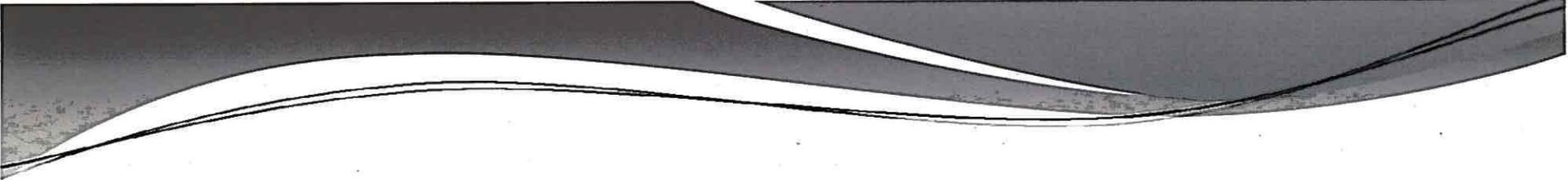


Equalities Impact Assessment



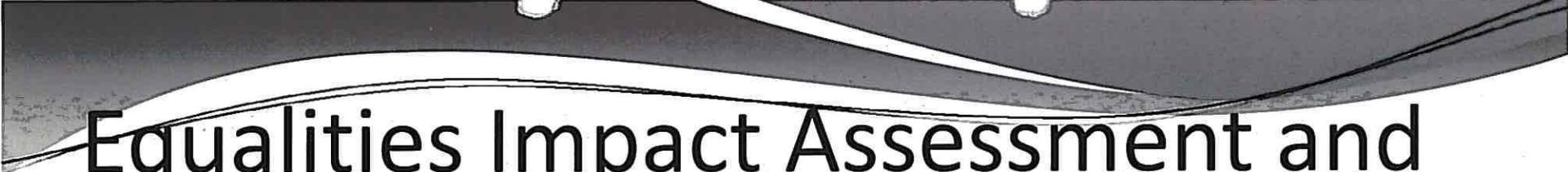
What is an Equalities Impact Assessment?

- 2010 Equality Act Local Authorities have a duty in undertaking their functions to prevent discrimination against people who are categorised as being disadvantaged or vulnerable within society
- all public authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, “have due regard to the need to....eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to the protected characteristics’.
- Equalities Impact Assessment is a means of assessing and reporting on those impacts



'Protected Characteristics'

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

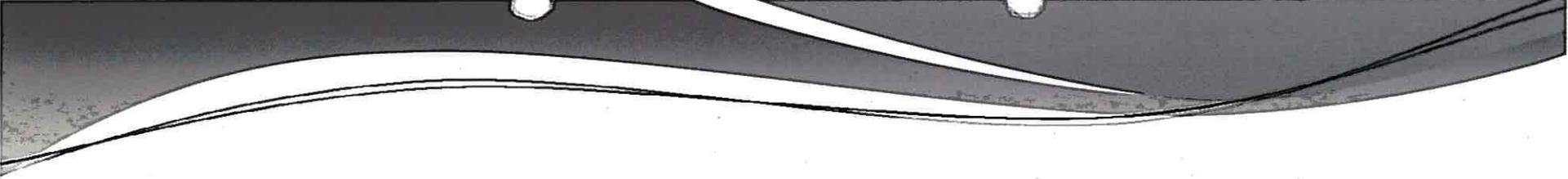


Equalities Impact Assessment and the Sefton Local Plan

- Undertaken on the draft Preferred Option document in 2013.
- Will be undertaken on the emerging Publication draft
- No significant issues raised but reiterated need to consider specific housing and other requirements for older people
- Also confirmed importance of considering the needs of people with disabilities in design and access policies in Local Plan



Conclusions



Key points to consider

- The Local Plan policies are written in the context of a sustainable planning framework and other regulations
- Sustainable development and social issues are enshrined in the NPPF
- Policies should be written to achieve sustainable development in any case and social issues are a key element of this
- Theoretically no major issues should be missed
- The various assessments and appraisals therefore often act as a quality checklist
- Value is often in documenting decisions and showing the public that wider concerns are considered
- Social value is therefore considered in many ways in preparing the Local Plan.



Next Stages

- Emerging Local Plan will be subject to sustainability appraisal, Health and Equalities Impact Assessments [ongoing]
- URS will undertake Sustainability Appraisal on our behalf and write the findings in a Sustainability Report [August]
- The Health and Equalities Impact Assessments will be done in-house with input from other teams [August]
- These will be published alongside the Local Plan in October for public comment [October]
- Sustainability Report and other assessments will be submitted as a Local Plan supporting document [2015]