LONGBRIDGE AREA ACTION PLAN
SUSTAINABILITY REPORT: PUBLIC CONSULTATION
NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY
BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL & BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS
FEBRUARY 2007
Introduction
This document is a summary of the Sustainability Report which has been produced as part of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the preferred options for the Longbridge Area Action Plan (AAP). A full version of the Sustainability Report is available to download from the Birmingham City’s and Bromsgrove District’s websites:

www.birmingham.gov.uk
http://bromsgrove.whub.org.uk/static/bdcindex.htm

What is a Sustainability Appraisal?
Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process that looks at the extent to which plans contribute to the achievement of a set of objectives that cover environmental, social and economic considerations.

What is a Strategic Environmental Assessment?
The SEA process aims to ensure that likely significant environmental effects arising from plans and programmes are identified, assessed, mitigated, communicated and monitored, and that opportunities for public involvement are provided. It enables plan-making authorities to incorporate environmental considerations into decision-making at an early stage and in an integrated way.
The Longbridge AAP falls within the scope of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) on ‘the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment’, and the UK SEA Regulations 2004. The SEA Directive is an important advance in planning and environmental law. The objective of the Directive is to: “Provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development”.

What is the Longbridge AAP?
The Longbridge AAP sets out the detailed planning framework for regeneration of the former MG Rover works in Longbridge. The AAP aims to guide the future development of the site, using the available land in the most effective way. This involves considering the proposed land uses in the previous Longbridge Development Framework (LDF), consulting with the local community on current needs and priorities and taking advice from technical development specialists about what is possible. Some proposals in the LDF are already being

The SA Process
The SA process involves five stages, described below:

Table 1:
The five stages of SA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA stages</th>
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<tr>
<td>A Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope.</td>
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<td>B Developing and refining options and assessing effects.</td>
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<td>C Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report.</td>
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<td>D Consulting on the preferred options of the AAP and Sustainability Report.</td>
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<td>E Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the AAP.</td>
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A more detailed methodology is presented in the full version of the Sustainability Report.
Constraints Plan
SA and the Longbridge AAP

The SA was carried out alongside, and has interacted with, the development of the Longbridge AAP. This approach helps ensure that any potential adverse social, economic and environmental effects that the plan may have are identified and mitigated against, or removed. In some instances it also highlights opportunities for the Longbridge AAP to improve the social, environmental or economic conditions.

SA Consultation

Public involvement through consultation is a key element of SA and SEA. The SEA Regulations set specific requirements for consultation with the Statutory Consultation Bodies, as well as the public and ‘other interested parties’.

In England, the Statutory Consultation Bodies are:

- English Heritage;
- Environment Agency; and

The consultation period for the Sustainability Report will span a six week period from 21st February to 4th April 2007.

All comments on the Sustainability Report and AAP Preferred Options received during the consultation period will be reviewed and taken into account during the preparation of the final AAP.

What does the Sustainability Report Contain?

A key product of the SA process is the Sustainability Report, which contains:

- An outline of the main objectives of the programme and its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes that may influence or be influenced by the Longbridge AAP;
- Baseline information about the environmental, social and economic characteristics of the Longbridge area;
- An appraisal of strategic alternatives (options);
- Any relevant existing social, environmental and economic problems affecting Longbridge;
- The SA objectives and the way the objectives and any social, environmental and economic considerations have been taken into account;
- The likely significant effects on the environment (biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors);
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant social, environmental or economic adverse effects as a result of the strategy; and
- A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.

What does this Non-Technical Summary Contain?

This Non-Technical Summary contains:

- Information about plans and policies relevant to the Longbridge AAP;
- A summary of the key environmental and sustainability issues in the area;
- The main objectives of the AAP;
- The SA objectives used to assess the preferred options of the AAP;
- A discussion of alternatives to the preferred options within the AAP;
- A summary of the likely significant social, environmental and economic effects of the AAP;
- Mitigation measures for preferred options identified as having significant adverse environmental effects, together with general best practice recommendations;
- Monitoring proposals; and
- Details of the consultation on this Sustainability Report and how to respond with comments and/or questions.
Plans and Policies Relevant to the AAP

The Longbridge AAP is influenced by a range of other policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives. It also needs to be consistent with national guidance, regional policy, strategic and local planning policies. The Sustainability Report contains a review of the relevant policies, plans and programmes.

Key Sustainability Issues within Longbridge

Key environmental and sustainability issues in the Longbridge area have been identified and are shown below. The full baseline study is detailed in the Sustainability Report.

- Public transport and the traffic generated by construction and operation of the development;
- Climate change and energy consumption, and the need to significantly reduce carbon emissions consequent of all new development;
- Air quality and local environmental quality, and how they are impacted by construction and operation of the development;
- Incorporating biodiversity within the new development and enhancing the ecological value of the area;
- Water and resource efficiency during construction and operation of the new development;
- Reducing the risk flooding from water courses, as well as surface water flooding, and improving water quality; and
- Reducing waste generated during construction and operation of the development, and increasing the re-use and recycling of waste.

AAP Objectives

The objectives identified for the AAP are as follows:

- To ensure that land uses on the site of the former MG Rover works enable Longbridge to make a contribution to regional economics by making such land the first choice location for key businesses in the promotion of the A38 high technology corridor and to maximise the potential of the site to attract regional investment.
- To create a target of 10,000 jobs across a range of skills and types on land released as part of the redevelopment of MG Rover through protecting existing employment, creating new employment opportunities that secure economic diversification and business growth, and providing a sustainable long-term job environment.
- To provide Longbridge with a heart that will give a sense of place and provide better opportunities for increased retail uses, leisure and health facilities and educational opportunities.
- To explore possible demand for additional housing, including affordable housing, and identify appropriate opportunities for new housing of a high standard of design and sustainability.
- To maintain and enhance the ecological balance and landscape value of the area and to create opportunities for wildlife habitats where possible by retaining and improving open spaces including formal parkland, Greenbelt and waterways. To ensure that all new development provides a safe environment and is of a unified and high quality design which adopts local distinctiveness.
- To improve public transport including through providing for a wider range of public transport including the provision of a park and ride site, the improvement of Longbridge station and the provision of new foot paths and cycle ways. To improve the existing highways network to provide safer and easier access and safeguard possible future strategic transport routes including a possible high quality transport link to Frankley and a new link to the M42.
• To ensure that proposals in the Area Action Plan are costed, viable and are deliverable within an agreed timescale, and to ensure development can commence early to secure regeneration.

• To ensure that all the proposals in the Area Action Plan adhere to the principles of sustainable development to ensure that Longbridge has a long-term future as a thriving community founded on a wide range of social and employment opportunities.

SA Objectives

SA objectives have been formulated and used as a recognised way of considering the sustainability effects of a plan and comparing alternatives to it.

The SA objectives have been developed taking account of environmental protection and sustainability objectives identified in other plans, programmes and legislation. The results of baseline data collection and identification of opportunities and constraints also feed into the development of objectives.

Eighteen SA objectives (see in Table 2) were developed in consultation with the Statutory Consultees and relevant stakeholders.

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<th>Table 2: SA Objectives used to assess the preferred options in the AAP</th>
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<td><strong>SA Objective</strong></td>
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Alternatives

Alternatives are a useful tool when considering different ways of achieving a plan in order that adverse effects are avoided. Alternatives are a statutory part of the SEA process. The SEA Directive requires that ‘...reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated’ and ‘an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with’ is provided (Article 5.1 and Annex I (h)).

The AAP for Longbridge has been developed with the aid of a wide-ranging public consultation process and has been supported and informed by a series of technical studies (listed at Section 3.2.3 of the Sustainability Report). The output of these activities was summarised and presented in an Issues and Options paper, which was consulted on in October / November 2006.

The Issues and Options paper explained the vision and objectives for Longbridge, and identified a series of five key themes along which action would be directed. These are:

- Employment and economy;
- Housing;
- Retailing and community services;
- Environment; and
- Transport

For each theme a number of issues and potential options for addressing them were discussed. A ‘do nothing’ option was also identified, whereby the site would be allowed to develop under current land uses and according to prevailing market-driven conditions.

Each option underwent a high-level preliminary assessment against the SA Objectives (see Section 6.2 and Appendices E and F of the Sustainability Report).

The paper concluded by identifying four broad Strategic Spatial Options for Longbridge, together with a land use variation and assorted infrastructure options. These underwent a more detailed assessment against the SA Framework and baseline (see Appendix G of the Sustainability Report). Following the Issues and Options consultation, Preferred Options were chosen; these also underwent detailed assessment (see Appendix H and Table 3 below).

Significant Effects Assessment

The results of the detailed assessment of effects of the AAP Preferred Options, shown in Table 3 below, reveal that the majority will lead to socioeconomic benefits but may come with environmental costs. The detailed assessment matrices are shown in Appendix H of the Sustainability Report, and an assessment of cumulative effects is shown in Chapter 6 and Appendix I. For details regarding mitigation, see Chapter 7 of the Sustainability Report.
Preferred Option | Summary of Effects (from Appendix H of the Sustainability Report)

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West Works and North Works Car Park: A Regional Investment Site (RIS) of 25ha minimum, with residential uses of approximately 400 dwellings with associated public open space. Other high quality development on the Bristol Road frontage including commercial uses and offices. The Longbridge Sports & Social club and playing field will be retained.

The proposal carries important and significant social and economic benefits, particularly with regard to economic regeneration and employment provision, where the Longbridge target of 10,000 new jobs can be met or exceeded in combination with employment land on other parts of the site. It has the potential to deliver some local environmental improvements. However, significant negative environmental effects will be generated with regards to resource use and efficiency (particularly water and energy) unless mitigation measures are adopted.

North Works: A new Local Centre for Longbridge comprising a foodstore, non-food retail, education, commercial, leisure, health centre, heritage centre, residential (300 apartments plus POS) and community uses; office uses on upper floors. Associated environmental measures/enhancements including a new public space/square.

The proposal carries important and significant socioeconomic benefits, particularly with regard to accessibility to services, regeneration, health and housing, as well as employment provision. Land uses contribute to the target of 10,000 new jobs. It has the potential to deliver some local environmental improvements, and the college campus will provide important and needed social benefits. However, significant negative environmental effects will be generated with regards to resource use and efficiency (particularly water and energy) unless mitigation measures are adopted.

Cofton Centre: Will be allocated for industrial/employment uses (Use Class B1, B2 and B8 uses). This could involve the retention and reuse of the existing Cofton centre buildings. Suitable uses would include light industry, general industry and warehousing, including green technology uses.

Re-use of existing site and buildings for employment has the potential to deliver some economic benefits by making a contribution to the target of 10,000 jobs with minimal negative effects. Identified effects arise from whether or not the opportunity to improve the sustainability credentials of the site is realised, particularly with regard to water use, energy efficiency and travel planning. Some site level environmental improvements are also possible.

East Works: Will be allocated for housing (approximately 700 dwellings) providing for a range of house types, styles and tenures including the potential for elderly care housing or similar and family housing. Linear open space walkway links through the site with links to the existing footpath network, new public open space, play and other facilities to serve the development will be provided. The culverted section of the River Arrow will be reopened if feasible. Small-scale local shopping facilities will be provided.

The level of new housing appears manageable against baseline conditions in the surrounding area - the outcome of the Housing Baseline Study will clarify this. Development will need to be carefully planned to ensure there are adequate services and open space, and that the increase in population does not increase pressure on existing facilities. In combination with proposed developments on the northern part of the site this may be achievable, but particular attention should be given to adequate school capacity and community facilities. There are site level environmental effects (including potential improvements) associated with redevelopment, but the most important issues are related to resource use, particularly water use and energy efficiency in new homes. Improved neighbourhood facilities will deliver minor benefits to the existing community and better enable it to absorb the effects of major new housing.

### Table 3:
Summary of Effects of the AAP Preferred Options
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Option</th>
<th>Summary of Effects (from Appendix H of the Sustainability Report)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Coforton Park: Will continue to be protected in the AAP. The following are proposed: improvements to the open space and sports facilities within the park and protection and enhancement of the SLINC; improved horticultural and leisure facilities; options for the provision on an Austin Heritage Centre (either within the park or within the new Longbridge centre).</td>
<td>Protection of, and improvements to, the Park will lead to only positive effects, particularly if the proposed Austin Heritage Centre can be developed on the (brownfield) car park or on previously developed land within the Local Centre. Specific benefits will be achieved in relation to human health, biodiversity, landscape and the preservation of industrial heritage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure - Highway Improvements: Re-alignment of the A38 and Lickey Road junction to provide an improved A38 as part of the strategic highway network. Also improvements to Longbridge Lane and its junctions, including minor widening at selected locations.</td>
<td>The option is mainly benign due to a lack of known environmental assets. It brings some minor socioeconomic benefits by facilitating regeneration and wider improvements in the area, improving accessibility to the site and reducing community severance, as well as offering some opportunities for environmental enhancement. Negative effects are mainly related to the short-term effects of implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure - Dedicated Service to Frankley Option A: Reintroduction of a heavy rail link between Longbridge Station and Frankley. This would be based upon 2 new stations, at Frankley Centre and Rubery Lane and provide at least a half hourly service.</td>
<td>The overall effect of this proposal is mixed; it has the potential to deliver some benefits to accessibility and social exclusion, and may encourage modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport. However, it is an inflexible public transport opportunity that does not penetrate certain parts of the community and will constrain opportunities for the developable area of the site. In addition there are significant negative environmental effects associated with the scheme, although these are mainly focused on the construction phase. This option may preclude realignment of the A38 or its ability to improve pedestrian and cyclist accessibility in the area. It would also limit the feasibility of the Quality Bus Network in serving wider areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure - Dedicated Service to Frankley Option B: High quality new bus link from Longbridge to, and around Frankley, using a segregated new route through West Works. A 10 minute frequency could be provided.</td>
<td>The overall effect of this option is positive, delivering socioeconomic benefits in terms of accessibility and social exclusion. The extent of socioeconomic benefits is being investigated by baseline feasibility studies into the areas a bus service would penetrate. The proposal carries few negative strategic environmental effects and offers the potential to support the development of new sustainable technologies by employing hydrogen buses, with associated benefits to carbon emissions and air quality. Some site level environmental impacts will be associated with construction.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preferred Option</strong></td>
<td><strong>Summary of Effects (from Appendix H of the Sustainability Report)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure - Park &amp; Ride, Interchange and Rail Station: an integrated public transport interchange in the North East corner of North Works providing a Quality Network of buses to serve key employment housing and shopping areas. It will have direct pedestrian access to the Local Centre, an improved Longbridge station, the Strategic Park &amp; Ride and multi-storey car park, preferably located to the South of Longbridge Lane.</td>
<td>There are minor potential positive social effects associated with this scheme, and a series of predominantly site level negative environmental impacts. This location may result in negative visual impacts on residential properties on Thurlstone Road. Research is inconclusive about the contribution Park and Ride can make to encouraging modal shift in isolation. Extensive improvements to provision of cycling and pedestrian routes and cycle storage, combined with promotion of public transport and effective through-ticketing between modes may increase the contribution to modal shift in the area. Air quality and carbon emissions are of greatest concern. It is a more suitable location to provide an effective interchange that is well integrated with Longbridge station and the proposed new centre than current (CENTRO) plans for a site to the north of Longbridge Lane.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure - River Rea Option 1: Open up the river in its natural course across the site. The river to be located in a green corridor approx 20m wide through North Works, with footpath, cycleways, biodiversity enhancements and flood attenuation</td>
<td>Mixed effect: the proposal will likely lead to more positive effects than negative, with particular benefits to quality of life (health, recreation and neighbourhood quality), and ecology and biodiversity. Potential negative effects are possible with regard to accessibility and public safety. Ground contaminants entering the water course and/or the minor aquifer are also a risk, but an assessment and risk-based remediation strategy will address this. The proposal does not achieve a continuous wildlife corridor across the site to outfall of the Rea at Daffodil Park, limiting the biodiversity value of the scheme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure - River Rea Option 2: Artificial watercourse across North Works at surface level with associated landscaping to form a green corridor with cycling and walking routes. The main river flow to be retained in culvert. Natural open channel through West Works, including biodiversity and accessibility improvements and flood storage capacity.</td>
<td>Mixed effect: the proposal will likely lead to more positive effects than negative, with particular benefits to quality of life (health, recreation and neighbourhood quality), and ecology and biodiversity. Potential negative effects are possible with regard to ground contaminants entering the water course and/or the minor aquifer, but an assessment and risk-based remediation strategy will address this. The proposal does not achieve a continuous wildlife corridor across the site to outfall of the Rea at Daffodil Park, limiting the biodiversity value of the scheme.</td>
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Mitigation

The assessment findings recognise that the majority of the AAP proposals will promote economic growth and social benefits. Alongside these positive effects, the SEA findings reveal that there could be significant adverse effects from several of the options. A series of strategic mitigation measures have been proposed which are designed to reduce or remove these effects. These are listed below:

• Consider marketing development as a landmark sustainable community, with new homes meeting EcoHomes ‘Excellent’ and other buildings meeting equivalent BREEAM standards.

• As a minimum condition of development, all buildings should be designed and built to the highest standards of environmental sustainability. Proposed standards are Code for Sustainable Homes 4 star rating or above, or BREEAM EcoHomes ‘Very Good’ or above, with other buildings (including educational, leisure, retail and transport facilities) meeting equivalent BREEAM standards.

• Installation of a CHP facility and/or microgeneration and renewables to provide cheap, efficient and reliable heat and energy with significantly reduced carbon emissions should be pursued. This may also have positive effects on deprivation by lowering household bills, stimulate demand for advanced technologies and/or renewable fuels elsewhere, and could achieve a positive synergy with High Technology land uses.

• As a minimum, new buildings should maximise the use of daylight, natural ventilation (passive solar design), be effectively insulated and employ other energy saving measures.

• In addition, buildings should be designed to withstand storms of greater intensity and be naturally cooler (without air conditioning) during the summer, in order to prepare for the effects of climate change.

• Water efficiency measures should include: rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling, metered intakes and low consumption equipment (eg, toilets). An appropriate consumption target would be a reduction to 100 litres per capita per day which equates to a 25% cut on current regional average, comparable with targets in other regions.

• Construction arisings should be re-used or recycled wherever possible. Exploit the opportunity to use sustainable materials and recycled aggregates, locally sourced where possible.

• Provide opportunities for on-site re-use of waste and separation of recyclable and compostable materials during operation.

• Strictly limit the amount of parking provision associated with new homes and workplaces in order to encourage greater use of nearby public transport.

• While the ultimate aim for the site will be to have an overarching Travel Plan, with overall targets and objectives, there is also the need to develop specific Travel Plans for each aspect of the development including; workplace, educational and residential Travel Plans.

• Ensure all new workplaces have installed showering facilities. Provide secure cycle storage at all workplaces, residential developments and public transport nodes.

• Consider ways of utilising the rail infrastructure for freight distribution, such as a small intermodal site at the Cofton Centre, bearing in mind the possible nature of final land uses.

• Make accessibility and walking / cycling infrastructure improvements across and within the site.
To maximise positive effects of redevelopment for local community ensure that appropriate re-training is provided to encourage people to adjust to new job opportunities, and that the proposed college provides flexible courses (part-time, evenings, weekends, on-job) and offers grant schemes. Ensure there are strong links between local employers, the Technology Park and the campus.

- Specific efforts should be made to employ the local labour supply during construction and operation.
- Take specific steps to encourage environmental technologies industries to locate in the redevelopment’s employment areas.
- Provide training in environmental management systems and encourage every business associated with the development to devise an EMS plan, as well as adopting other positive business practices that benefit and value staff and the local community. Specifically target these at any new business incubation centre.
- Develop community training and engagement programmes to address community ownership of environmental initiatives.
- Ensure provision of a full range of facilities, as identified in the Community Needs Study.
- Arrange for provision of sufficient additional school capacity to accommodate the needs of new housing. If new schools are to be provided ensure improvement and funding schemes are initiated for existing institutions.
- Support schemes such as farmer’s markets to promote sustainable production and consumption.
- Exploit the opportunity to provide a Heritage Centre to preserve and disseminate an understanding of the industrial heritage of the area.
- Explore innovative measures to design-out crime including street design, natural surveillance, street lighting (and CCTV if necessary).

- The Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) suggest that, in addition to appropriate levels of open and play space, there should be provision for 1ha of Local Nature Reserve land per thousand of population (approximately 3.3ha for 1,400 new dwellings), and all homes should be within 300 metres of a natural area.
- Ensure that open space incorporates biodiversity value such as links to green infrastructure and hedgerows. Steps should be taken to avoid any adverse impact on adjacent natural or protected areas.
- Avoid building on Greenbelt and open space; make use of previously developed land first.

In addition to these, the Sustainability Report recommends various best practice measures to be considered in relation to the infrastructure options for Longbridge and Environmental Impact Assessment of planning applications.

**Monitoring**

The purpose of monitoring is to measure the social, environmental and economic effects of the AAP, as well as to measure success against the plan’s objectives. It is therefore beneficial if the monitoring strategy builds on monitoring systems which are already in place. The proposed monitoring framework focuses on those aspects of the environment that are likely to be negatively impacted upon, or where the impact is uncertain.

The inclusion of the monitoring proposals for consultation in the SA is a useful mechanism for obtaining views and feedback from a range of quarters, including those agencies who will potentially contribute to the monitoring process. Several other indicators could be used and may be added before monitoring commences. Monitoring reports should be published periodically as new information becomes available. The full suggested monitoring framework is given in Appendix J of the Sustainability Report.
Commenting on the Sustainability Report

The Sustainability Report has been produced alongside the AAP Preferred Options Consultation Document so that comments can be made on the AAP with the benefit of the information presented in the Sustainability Report. These documents will be made available for the public and other interested parties to inspect and comment as they wish at:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birmingham City Council</th>
<th>Bromsgrove District Council</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council House</td>
<td>The Council House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria Square</td>
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The Sustainability Report and the separate Non-Technical Summary will also be made available on the Councils’ websites:

www.birmingham.gov.uk
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

The consultation period of this Sustainability Report will span a period of six weeks, from 21st February to 4th April 2007.

Next Steps

Following consultation on the Preferred Options for the Longbridge Area Action Plan and Sustainability Report, all comments will be examined and worked into the process of finalising the options. Once agreed, the AAP will be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval, together with an updated Sustainability Report, and both documents will undergo a further six week consultation period.

Once the Planning Inspector has reviewed the AAP and issued a binding report on the plan’s soundness, the AAP may be adopted. At that point a Post Adoption Statement must be issued, detailing how the findings of the sustainability appraisal and consultation activities have been taken into account.