



# **Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy Development Plan Document**

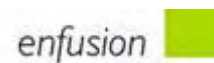
## **Sustainability Appraisal**

### **Adoption Statement**

by Clare Harmer and Rob Gardner (C4S)  
and Ruth Thomas (Enfusion)

**July 2009**

Centre for Sustainability (C4S) *in association with*  
Enfusion



Centre for Sustainability at TRL Limited *in association with* Enfusion



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Authors: Clare Harmer (C4S at TRL Limited) and Ruth Thomas (Enfusion)

Quality reviewed: Rob Gardner (C4S at TRL Limited)

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# Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Core Strategy	2
3	How the Environmental Report has been taken into account.....	4
4	Consultation.....	4
5	Alternatives.....	5
6	Changes to the Core Strategy .....	6
7	Monitoring.....	7

# 1 Introduction

Regulations require planning authorities to replace their minerals local plans and waste local plans with minerals and waste development frameworks (MWDF). Wiltshire Council (WC) and Swindon Borough Council's (SBC) Minerals Core Strategy forms part of the MWDF. The document must be subject to both Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) which implement European Directive 2001/42/EC, known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.

Although the requirement to carry out both an SA and SEA is mandatory, it is possible to satisfy the requirements of both pieces of legislation through a single assessment process. Government guidance for undertaking SEA<sup>1</sup> and for SA of Development Plan Documents<sup>2</sup> details how the SA and SEA should be integrated into one process.

The SEA Regulations require that a 'statement' be made available to accompany the adopted plan or programme. This statement must contain information on:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme;
- How the Environmental Report has been taken into account;
- How opinions expressed in relation to the consultations on the plan/ programme and Environmental Report have been taken into account;
- The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

This document is the 'statement' that has been produced for the SA/SEA of the Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy following its adoption. In line with the requirements of the SEA Regulations, it provides the information listed above.

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<sup>1</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (ODPM 2005)

<sup>2</sup> Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents (ODPM 2005)

## **2 How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Core Strategy**

The combined SA/SEA process has been designed to ensure sustainability considerations are integrated into planning and decision making processes. SA is an iterative process, thereby influencing and informing each stage of plan development. Interaction between the planning and SA teams at several key stages during the development of the Core Strategy has helped to incorporate sustainability and environmental considerations into the plan. Throughout its development the SA process has improved the robustness of the plan by focussing attention early on the environment and sustainability and specific issues raised in the scoping phase.

At each stage, recommendations were made by the SA team, including suggestions for new or amended policies and revisions to options and objectives. Other recommendations made by the SA team were also adopted, for example to provide a clearer context to the supporting text that accompanies the policies.

The SA process aimed to ensure the integration of environmental considerations into the Core Strategy preparation by:

- Undertaking the SA process in parallel with development of the Core Strategy and by providing information on sustainability implications to influence the content of the Core Strategy;
- Issuing the Scoping Report to the statutory consultees for comments on the key environmental issues and proposed scope of the SA;
- Undertaking an assessment of the Issues and Options;
- Recording an assessment of the environmental effects of the Core Strategy in three SA Reports written as the strategy was progressed. SA Reports were produced alongside the Preferred Options, the Revised Preferred Options and the Submission Document; and
- Making recommendations in each SA Report for how the Core Strategy could be amended to reduce or offset adverse environmental effects and enhance positive effects.

Table 1 lists the SA and Core Strategy documents that have been produced through the process. The documents are all available on the Wiltshire Council Website <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/planning/planningpolicy/mineralsandwastedevelopmentplan/mineralscorestrategy.htm>.

**Table 1: SA and Core Strategy Documents Produced**

Report	Purpose	Availability	Who produced the report / Date
Scoping Report	To consult on the proposed scope of the SA.	All documents published for consultation were available from County Hall, the Borough Council offices, the district council offices and all libraries in Wiltshire and Swindon. They were also available on the WCC website.	C4S August 2005
Issues and Options	To set out the 'key issues and options' that the County and Borough Councils considered would influence land use planning for minerals over the plan period.		WC and SBC November 2005
Issues and Options Appraisal	To assess the initial issues and options against the SA framework.	Copies of the document, and related documents, along with the details of where the document would be available for inspection, were sent to various bodies.	C4S April 2006
Preferred Options Stage	To set out the draft spatial strategy and preferred options.		WC and SBC May 2006
Preferred Options SA Report	To highlight to plan makers and consultees the likely effects of the Core Strategy.	Organisations contacted included the statutory consultees for all the DPDs consulted on, these included the Regional Planning Body, the Highways Agency and all Local Planning Authorities, County Councils and Parish/Town Councils that adjoin or cover the same area as the Local Planning Authority, as well as the statutory environmental bodies.	C4S May 2006
Revised Preferred Options	To set out the revised spatial strategy and preferred options.		WC and SBC April 2007
Revised Preferred Options SA Report	To highlight to plan makers and consultees the likely effects of the Core Strategy.	Organisations contacted included the statutory consultees for all the DPDs consulted on, these included the Regional Planning Body, the Highways Agency and all Local Planning Authorities, County Councils and Parish/Town Councils that adjoin or cover the same area as the Local Planning Authority, as well as the statutory environmental bodies.	C4S April 2007
Submission Document	To provide the final Core Strategy content, including the spatial planning context to minerals in Wiltshire and Swindon and the policies that make up the Core Strategy.		WC and SBC March 2008
Submission SA Report	To highlight to plan makers and consultees the likely effects of the Core Strategy.	All published documents are available from County Hall, the Borough Council offices, the former district council offices and all libraries in Wiltshire and Swindon. They are also available on the WC website.	C4S March 2008
Adoption Statement and publication of adopted Core Strategy	To report that the Core Strategy has been adopted and where it will be available for inspection.		WC and SBC July 2009
SA Adoption Statement (this document)	To highlight how the SA process has influenced the development of the Core Strategy and set a framework for monitoring the sustainability effects.	The SA Adoption Statement is being made available to view free of charge at County Hall, Trowbridge and on the Wiltshire Council website.	C4S July 2009

### **3 How the Environmental Report has been taken into account**

During its development, the Core Strategy has been amended based on information provided in the three SA Reports. Mitigation measures were identified to offset the minor negative effects and to ensure that the plan enhanced its positive effects and these proposed measures have been considered by the plan-makers as the Core Strategy has developed. Some of the measures identified were appropriate at the strategic level while others are more appropriate for lower level planning documents and mineral operations themselves and these will need to be considered during site allocation.

### **4 Consultation**

Consultation is an important part of SEA and SA and has been undertaken at various stages of the process, as outlined in Table 1. After each round of consultation, the comments received were taken into account as the Core Strategy and SA progressed. Within the three SA Reports detail was provided on the previous round of consultation. The SA Reports provided information on who was consulted and who responded. They also reported the comments that were made and what action was taken as a result. In addition, where consultation comments were not taken into account an explanation was provided for this taking this approach. Detailed information on the consultation undertaken can be found in the following documents:

- Preferred Options SA Report (May, 2006): Main Report Section 1.5 & Appendix F;
- Revised Preferred Options SA Report (April, 2007): Main Report Section 1.5 & Appendix C; and
- Submission Document SA Report (March, 2008): Main Report Section 1.5 & Appendix C.

In March of 2008, the submission draft of the Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State. This document along with the Submission Draft SA Report was then published for one final round of public consultation that ran from Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March to Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2008. Two consultation responses were received on the Submission Draft SA Report.

The Environment Agency commented that the SA report needed be updated to include information on groundwater source protection zones and the County Archaeologist noted a number of inconsistencies relating to the historic environment.

Given the nature of these comments the SA Report for the Core Strategy will not be updated at this stage of the process but instead the comments received will be used to inform subsequent SA activities related to the development of other DPDs making up the MWDF.

NB: The information requested by the Environment Agency on groundwater source protection zones was provided in the Development Control Policies Submission Draft SA Report, a report that was published after the SA Report for the Core Strategy. Therefore as this SA Report is the most up to date, the information within it will be taken forward for the subsequent SA activity on Site Allocations.

## 5 Alternatives

Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council formally considered alternatives at three stages of the Core Strategy's development, including:

- Issues and Options;
- Preferred Options; and
- Revised Preferred Options.

During the Issues and Options stage, WC and SBC considered various options in relation to:

- How long should the Core Strategy plan for;
- The spatial vision and objectives;
- Safeguarding minerals resources, railhead facilities and minerals recycling facilities;
- Minerals supply – aggregates;
- Minerals supply – recycled and secondary materials;
- Minerals supply – non-aggregate minerals;
- Strategic approach for identifying sites for future minerals working and minerals recycling facilities;
- Protecting residential amenity;
- Sustainable transportation of materials;
- Restoration and after-use of minerals working; and
- Policy monitoring implementation and review.

In most cases, a 'business as usual' approach was considered along with at least one other alternative option. Detailed information of the alternatives considered and the assessment findings throughout the process can be found in the following documents:

- Preferred Options SA Report:
  - Issues and Options Appraisal: Main Report Section 5 & Appendix C; and
  - Preferred Options Assessment (including assessment of a number of alternative options): Main Report Section 6 & Appendix D.
- Revised Preferred Options SA Report:
  - Revised Preferred Options Assessment (including the assessment of a number of alternative options): Main Report Section 7 & Appendix D.

At each stage the SA assessed and reported the likely effects of implementing the identified alternative options and this helped WC and SBC to decide how the Core Strategy would progress. However, it is the Council's view that the national forecasts for aggregates provision and the subsequent sub-regional apportionment limited their options in terms of the scale of provision and spatial distribution of future aggregates production in the plan area and it is these limitations that are considered the main reasons for choosing these more strategic elements of the Core Strategy as adopted.

## **6 Changes to the Core Strategy**

Following the Examination in Public and subsequent Inspector's Report a number of minor changes have been made to the Core Strategy. These changes are largely minor changes in wording and it was determined that they did not warrant the need to undertake any further SA. In particular, they would not result in the addition or removal of any significant effects from the existing SA.

The only major amendment is the deletion of the first paragraph of policy MCS7, concerning the protection and enhancement of the environment, which has resulted in MC7 solely becoming a policy on flooding. This has been determined not to have a significant effect on the findings of the SA because the Core Strategy continues to recognise the need to protect and enhance the environment through its vision, strategic objectives and several other of its policies, i.e. MCS1 (B), MCS8, and MCS10.

## **7 Monitoring**

The SEA Directive requires monitoring of the significant environmental effects of implementing the plan. However, as the SA identified no significant effects the monitoring will instead monitor the negative and uncertain effects that have been identified in the assessment. This will help to provide for monitoring of any unforeseen effects. Where uncertain effects are to be monitored the SA will only monitor those which are potentially adverse.

Monitoring already plays a large role in the performance management of the Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council's minerals planning process, with the performance of a variety of indicators being tracked against targets. There is also considerable monitoring activity being carried out at local authority level, and by bodies such as the Environment Agency and Regional Aggregate Working Parties (RAWP). Where relevant, the SA has made use of these existing monitoring processes. The monitoring measures to be used to monitor the implementation of the Core Strategy are provided below in Table 2.

**Table 2: Monitoring Measures**

<b>Abridged SA Objective</b>	<b>Effect to be monitored</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>
Suitable Housing	Restricted housing development	Area lost to non mineral developments permitted on safeguarded minerals sites	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
Vibrant Communities	Conflicts between minerals development and communities	Number of events where a developer provides opportunity for local communities to discuss a development proposal: a) prior to the submission of the planning application b) once a planning application has been submitted	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers
		Percentage of new developments that are the subject of Community Liaison Group Meetings	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers
Freight Transportation	Modal shift to more sustainable modes of freight transportation.	Number of active developments that utilise the transport of minerals by: a) conveyor b) rail c) water	Minerals Developers	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers
Habitats and Species	Potential effects on biodiversity	Number of applications for minerals development located within: a) European Designated SAC/SPA b) SSSI c) Ancient Woodland d) National Nature Reserve e) County Wildlife Sites f) RIGS g) Local Nature Reserve	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
		Number of applications for minerals development permitted contrary to the advice	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC

		of the County Ecologist			
		Number of applications for minerals development subject to a section 106 agreement in relation to biodiversity	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
Land Conservation	Increased landtake	Area of land used for mineral extraction	Minerals Developers	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers
Landscape	Potential effects on landscape	Percentage of applications for minerals development submitted with a landscape character and visual impact assessment	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
		Percentage of applications for minerals development that lie adjacent to or within an AONB or adjacent to the New Forest National Park, that are informed by the relevant management plan.	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
Rural Ways of Life	Potential effects on rural ways of life	Number of events where a developer provides opportunity for local communities to discuss a development proposal: a) prior to the submission of the planning application b) once a planning application has been submitted	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers
		Percentage of new developments that are the subject of Community Liaison Group Meetings	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers
Cultural Assets	Potential effects on cultural assets	Number of applications for minerals development that share a boundary with or overlie a SAM	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
		Number of applications for minerals development within or adjacent to the World Heritage Site of Stonehenge and Avebury	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
		Number of applications for minerals development permitted contrary to the advice of the County Archaeologist	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC

Flooding	Increased risk of flooding	Number of proposals for minerals development that proceed contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ EA
	Increased flood storage capacity	Number of developments that provide additional storage capacity where a need has been identified through the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment/ Flood Risk Assessment process	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ EA / Minerals Developers
Water Consumption	Increased water consumption	Number of planning applications granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either water resources, flood defence or water quality	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ EA
		Number of planning applications that include provisions for the efficient use of water on site	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
Waste	Increase in minerals waste	Number of applications for minerals development supported by a waste management plan	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers
Minimise Resource-use	Decrease in primary resources	Production of secondary/recycled aggregates	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Industry
		Number of applications for reception, processing and distribution of secondary/recycled aggregates	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Industry
		Number of applications for major development that show consideration has been given towards the reduction of use of primary aggregates in favour of use of secondary and recycled aggregates	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ Developers
Pollution	Increased pollution levels	Number of applications informed by an Environmental Statement	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers
		Number of applications providing clear details of mitigation measures that will be implemented to make the proposal acceptable	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers

		Number of minerals sites with an Environmental Management Plan	Minerals Developers	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers
Climate Change	Increased greenhouse gas emissions	Number of planning applications that include provisions for the efficient use of energy on site	Planning Applications	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers
		Percentage of minerals developments permitted within: a) 1km b) 1km – 2km c) 2km – 5km of the Wiltshire HGV Route Network	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
		Number of active developments that utilise the transport of mineral by: a) conveyor b) rail c) water	Minerals Developers	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers