



Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Development Control Policies Development Plan Document

Sustainability Appraisal

Adoption Statement

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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 Development Control (DC) Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) 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 SEA¹ and for SA of Development Plan Documents² 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 DC Policies following its adoption. In line with the requirements of the SEA Regulations, it provides the information listed above.

¹ A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (ODPM 2005)

² Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents (ODPM 2005)

2 How environmental considerations have been integrated into the DC Policies

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 DC Policies 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 DC Policies preparation by:

- Undertaking the SA process in parallel with development of the DC Policies and by providing information on sustainability implications to influence the content of the Development Control Policies;
- Issuing the Scoping Report to the statutory consultees for comments on the key environmental issues and proposed scope of the SA;
- Recording an assessment of the environmental effects of the DC Policies 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 DC Policies could be amended to reduce or offset adverse environmental effects and enhance positive effects.

Table 1 lists the SA and DC Policies 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/mineralsdevelopmentcontrolpolicies.htm>

Table 1: SA and DC Policies 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. 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. 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 August 2005
Issues and Options Report	To set out the 'key issues and options' considered for controlling minerals (and minerals related) development. ³		WCC and SBC November 2005
Preferred Options Stage	To set out the preferred policies that will help deliver the long term vision for Minerals Planning in Wiltshire and Swindon.		WCC and SBC June 2006
Preferred Options SA Report	To highlight to plan makers and consultees the likely effects of the DC Policies.		C4S June 2006
Revised Preferred Options	To set out the revised policies that will help deliver the long term vision for Minerals Planning in Wiltshire and Swindon.		WCC and SBC July 2007
Revised Preferred Options SA Report	To highlight to plan makers and consultees the likely effects of the DC Policies.		C4S July 2007
Submission Document	To provide the final policies that make up the DC Policies DPD.		WCC and SBC July 2008
Submission SA Report	To highlight to plan makers and consultees the likely effects of the DC Policies.	C4S July 2008	
Adoption Statement and publication of adopted DC Policies DPD	To report that the DC Policies DPD has been adopted and where it will be available for inspection.	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 were also available on the WC website.	WC and SBC September 2009
SA Adoption Statement (this document)	To highlight how the SA process has influenced the development of the DC Policies 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 September 2009

³ Due to the procedural nature of these options it was not possible to undertake an initial sustainability assessment at this stage. See Section 5: Alternatives.

3 How the Environmental Report has been taken into account

During its development, the DC Policies DPD 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 DC Policies have 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 DC Policies 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 taking this approach. Detailed information on the consultation undertaken can be found in the following documents:

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

In July of 2008, the submission draft of the DC Policies DPD 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 4th August to Friday 12th September 2008. No consultation responses were received on the Submission Draft SA Report.

5 Alternatives

It was considered by WC and SBC that no realistic strategic options for DC policies were available to policy-makers, therefore where possible Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council considered alternative policies rather than 'alternative

options' for each issue. Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council formally considered alternatives at three stages of the DC Policies DPD's development, including:

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

The formal consultation on the DC policies, particularly with the statutory bodies, assisted WC and SBC choose the final set of DC policies as adopted. For example, a more detailed policy on the water environment was preferred by consultees and therefore this policy option was taken forward.

The SA Reports assessed and reported the likely effects of implementing the identified alternative options and this helped WC and SBC to decide how the DC Policies would progress.

Issues and Options

The Issues and Options Report highlighted problems with the current Minerals Local Plan, the main concern being that the plan was formulated in the late 1990s in accordance with a now outdated system of guidance and statutory regulation. In addition, the existing policy framework was described as overly complex, unwieldy, repetitive and negatively worded. It was decided that this no longer fitted in with the more streamlined approach advocated by the new planning provisions. This led WCC and SBC to review their existing minerals policy base and reduce the number of policies used and in addition alter the style of the policies used.

During the Issues and Options stage, WCC and SBC considered three procedural options for taking each of the existing policies forward in the evolving DPD. These options were to:

- Continue with the policy;
- Modify/update the policy; or
- Delete the policy.

Due to the procedural nature of these options it was not possible to undertake a sustainability assessment at this stage. Bearing in mind the comments made above with regard to the complexity of the original options, WCC and SBC made the decision to delete or modify/update their policies rather than continue with the existing set of policies. By streamlining their policies WCC and SBC were able to consider the latest issues and guidance on sustainability and the environment.

Preferred Options

During the development of the DC Policies, WCC and SBC continued to consider various options. In May, 2006 a version of the Preferred Options was assessed in detail by C4S. This assessment of the Preferred Options also included an assessment of Alternative Options that had been outlined at this stage of the process. Alternative Options were outlined for controlling the impacts of minerals development and site restoration. Detailed information of the alternatives considered and the assessment findings can be found in the Preferred Options SA Report Main Report Section 6 & Appendix E.

Revised Preferred Options

Further work was undertaken on the policies which resulted in a revised set of preferred options being developed in July 2007. These options were more focused on the specific needs and opportunities that related to the plan area. No alternatives were considered at this stage of the process.

6 Changes to the DC Policies

Following the Examination in Public and subsequent Inspector's Report a number of minor changes have been made to the DC Policies DPD. These changes are minor alterations to 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.

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 negative effects that have been identified in the assessment. This will help to provide for identification and 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 DC Policies are provided below in Table 2.

Table 2: Monitoring Measures

Abridged SA Objective	Effect to be monitored	Indicator	Data Source	Frequency	Who is responsible?
Vibrant Communities	Impacts on local 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
		Number of applications informed by an Environmental Statement	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
		Number of applications providing clear details of mitigation measures that will be implemented to make the proposal acceptable	Development Control Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
Vibrant Economy	Land available for minerals development	Provision of an aggregates landbank	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers
		Remaining resources allocated in Preferred Areas or sites	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
		Total resources allocated in Site Allocations DPD	Core Strategy Indicator	Annually	WC/SBC
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	Reduced opportunities for wetland creation	Number of applications for minerals development that provide for wetland creation	Minerals Developers	Annually	WC/SBC/ Minerals Developers

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
	Reduced opportunities for wetland habitat creation	Number of applications for minerals development that provide for wetland creation	Minerals Developers	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 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	Decreased water 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

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