

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Adoption Statement

Milton Keynes Minerals Local Plan

Milton Keynes Council formally adopted the Minerals Local Plan on **1 July 2017**. The Local Plan identifies what minerals development should go where, why it should go there, and how by doing so, it can make other land use and infrastructure systems function better. It considers the impact and design of new minerals development, and focuses on how this development can best relate to the surrounding land use and link with the wider community.

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (16) (3) and (4), which require a statement to be produced on adoption of a plan and programme, setting out:

1. How environmental considerations and the Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report have been integrated into the plan;
2. How the environmental report has been taken into account;
3. How opinions expressed in response to relevant consultations on the SA report have been taken into account;
4. The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and
5. The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

How environmental considerations and the Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report have been integrated into the plan.

When preparing planning documents, such as the Minerals Local Plan, planning authorities must conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC. This must include assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the Strategic Environmental Assessment or SEA Directive). SA effectively broadens the concept of SEA to encompass economic and social impacts. The requirement to carry out SA and SEA are distinct. However, it is possible to satisfy both through a single appraisal process. It should be noted that where reference is made to SA it should be taken to include the requirement of the SEA Directive. The integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of Plans is the key focus of the SA process.

The Minerals Local Plan sets out the strategic vision and objectives for minerals related development, identify the mineral resources of local and national importance as well as the amount of these to be provided from within Milton Keynes Borough, identify the development strategy and site-specific allocations to facilitate delivery of a steady and adequate supply of aggregates and maintenance of landbanks, and set out the policies and proposals against which planning applications for minerals related development will be determined. The Local Plan also sets out policies and proposals that apply to other forms of development, covering matters such as safeguarding of minerals resources of local and national importance, as well as measures to reduce potential land use conflict with incompatible forms of development.

The SA was integrated into the plan-making process with a series of appraisals produced alongside key stages in preparing the Local Plan. During the SA scoping process a set of SA objectives were developed. The SA objectives were formed by investigating locally-specific economic, environmental, social and spatial issues and identifying ways that these issues could be addressed. These objectives set out the basis for the SA framework, and all further sustainability assessment. They acted as the main vehicle for integrating environmental and sustainability consideration into the plan.

The strategic options were assessed against the SA objectives to determine any potential significant effects. Consideration of potential effects and sustainability issues influenced the selection of the preferred approach; which was assessed further to determine potential impacts on sustainability issues and whether these could be addressed. This resulted in refinement of the preferred approach and fed into the monitoring requirements.

A detailed account of how key environmental and sustainability issues were taken into consideration throughout the development of the Local Plans is contained in the SA Environmental Report.

How the environmental report has been taken into account.

Sustainability issues (including social, environmental and economic issues) were taken into consideration in identifying the preferred policy approach and developing the draft plan through the application of the SA Framework in assessing the potential effects of the strategic options. This allowed for specific problems and issues with each option to be highlighted. In addition, the options were compared with each other and with the current social, environmental and economic characteristics of the area. This process assisted in identifying which option was the most appropriate to achieve sustainable development given local circumstances.

How opinions expressed in response to relevant consultations on the SA report have been taken into account.

The plan-making process involved several stages of public engagement that fed into the preparation of the Local Plan. The Local Plan was also subject to an examination in public to determine whether it was 'sound'. The plan making and SA process were undertaken concurrently, and as such public consultation for both documents was undertaken simultaneously over the period 30 October 2013 and 22 January 2014 for the issues and options consultation paper and updated SA Scoping Report, 13 August to 5 November 2014 for the draft Local Plan and draft SA Environmental Report and 27 January to 9 March 2016 for the final draft (proposed submission) Local Plan and SA Environmental Report. Public consultation was undertaken in accordance with the SCI and Regulations.

Key statutory stakeholders, including the SEA Consultation Bodies were consulted at each stage of the plan-making process. Other stakeholders including industry and the public were also consulted. All public consultation documents, and supporting materials (including the SA), were made available (i) to view online at the Milton Keynes Council website; and (ii) to be inspected (free of charge) during normal office hours Monday to Friday at the Civic Offices in Milton Keynes as well as all Milton Keynes Council libraries.

Representations received, combined with consideration of local circumstances, were taken into account and assisted in identifying the scope of the partial review, the preferred approach and in developing the resultant policies.

Further information on consultations undertaken and the responses received can be found in the Statement of Engagement and Consultation available to view online on the Councils website.

The reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.

The Local Plan sets out the broad strategy for minerals in the Borough and the amount of provision needed, identifies specific site allocations for minerals related development and covers aspects of controlling and managing minerals development.

The strategic issues explored through the plan preparation process included:

- Spatial strategy for mineral extraction;
- Aggregate provision to be met,
- Commitment to maintaining landbanks,

- Safeguarding mineral resources and ancillary development / infrastructure,
- Development control and management policies, and
- Identification of specific sites for minerals-related development required to facilitate delivery of the identified aggregate provision.

A number of reasonable alternatives (strategic options) were investigated through the plan preparation process. The potential effects resulting from implementation of the strategic options were assessed against each individual SA objective and compared with each other. The resultant policies represent the options determined to be most appropriate for Milton Keynes's particular circumstances, and that provided for a significant contribution towards sustainable development.

As a result of the examination public hearing sessions in October 2016 some non-significant amendments were made in response to representations received from consultation, to more closely reflect and update reference to national planning policy, to clarify data sources of and/or update baseline data as well as to correct typographical errors.

The SA concluded that the draft plan represented the most sustainable in light of other alternatives; hence the Local Plan is to be adopted in light of other alternatives.

The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme.

Significant environmental effects and implementation of the plan will be monitored through the Local Plan and SA monitoring framework (these two, though separate, are inter-related) with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at the earliest stage so that remedial action can be taken if required.

The SA monitoring framework for the Local Plan was developed to specifically focus on significant sustainability effects and seeks to measure indicators which may establish a causal link between implementation of the plan and the likely significant effects being monitored. Gaps in existing information will be identified so that consideration might be given to how these could be addressed in the longer term.

The Council is responsible for conducting monitoring on implementation of the Local Plan; however the Environment Agency, Highways Agency, English Heritage, Natural England, the minerals industry and the development industry also have a role in monitoring.

Monitoring and reporting of results, is intended to be undertaken in line with the Authority Monitoring Report.

Further information

The full SA Environmental Report is available to view online on the Council website (<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy>).

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