

19th October, 2023

Eglingham Neighbourhood Plan Update

Strategic Environmental Assessment Addendum Note

Introduction

Following a Regulation 14 Consultation on the Eglingham Neighbourhood Plan, several changes have been made to the draft Plan in response to comments received from Northumberland County Council (and other stakeholders).

An updated version of the Plan will be published for a final stage of consultation with wider stakeholders under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012). It is important to revisit important pieces of supporting evidence to explore how such changes to the plan could affect outcomes.

The purpose of this note is to discuss the changes that have been made to the Neighbourhood Plan (post Regulation 14), and to establish whether there are any implications for the Strategic Environmental Assessment findings. This note is an addendum to the Environmental Report.

What are the key changes?

Several changes have been made in relation to format and wording that do not affect the content or intent of the Neighbourhood Plan. These are considered to have no effect on the SEA findings. More substantive changes are listed below:

- Three areas of local green space (LGS) have been removed from the list proposed in the draft Plan.
- Policy 5 has been redrafted, but still relates to an Area of High Landscape Value.
- Additional detail is introduced for Policy 6 with regards to non-designated heritage assets and areas of archaeological interest.
- The habitats and species policy has been amended, and parts of the policy have been extracted and introduced into new standalone policies for the River Tweed SAC and the Coastal Mitigation Service.

Are there any implications for the SEA findings?

The effects identified in the SEA Environmental Report are summarised in Table 1 below. The aim of this SEA update is to examine the changes discussed above and determine what effects they will have (and whether this changes the conclusions in effect significance reached below).

Table 1: Summary of effects identified in the Environmental Report

SEA Objective	Summary of effects
Biodiversity	Moderate positive effects
Climate Change	Moderate positive effects
Historic Environment	Moderate positive effects
Landscape	Moderate positive effects
Population and Community	Minor positive effects Minor negative effects

The updated appraisal has been undertaken as a desktop exercise, in a manner consistent with previous work. The author of this note is Ian McCluskey (an associate director at the consultancy AECOM) who has over fifteen years' experience undertaking impact assessments for a range of plan documents.

Taking each SEA Objective in turn, the changes to the Plan are discussed below.

Biodiversity

There is some biodiversity value associated with the proposed LGS sites. Therefore, with 3 LGS sites being removed, these are afforded slightly less protection from change. Nevertheless, the overall picture remains positive.

The policies relating to biodiversity provide greater clarity in relation to the priority habitats that exist within the plan area.

Though new policies are proposed in relation to coastal mitigation service and the River Tweed SAC, the content is essentially the same as the previous version of the Plan and seek to reinforce the policies. Therefore, effects are limited in this respect.

Overall, the changes do not lead to any significant effects and do not change the overall conclusions in the Environmental Report.

Climate change

The changes are unlikely to have a significant effect with regards to climate change mitigation and resilience. Therefore, the findings remain the same.

Historic environment

Amendments to the policy relating to non-designated heritage assets are beneficial, as they introduce requirements to record features should it be deemed acceptable for their loss or change. Whilst positive, this does not lead to any significant effects and does not change the overall conclusions in the Environmental Report.

The designation of local green space is identified as positive with regards to the historic environment, and so the removal of three spaces from the proposed list reduces the level of 'protection' afforded. However, the majority of proposed LGSs remain in the Plan, and other policy measures will still apply to provide protection to non-designated green spaces. As such, the plan is still considered to have positive effects on heritage.

Landscape

The changes to the landscape policy provide additional clarity and greater flexibility in the consideration of cumulative effects (rather than only referring to tall 'structures'). Whilst these changes are positive, they do not change the overall conclusions in the Environmental Report.

Population and community

The proposed changes are not directly related to population and community factors and are unlikely to have any significant effects. The designation of LGS is positive with regards to community identify, and so the removal of three proposed sites is slightly less positive. However, the overall effects are still considered to be minor positives in this respect.

Conclusion

The changes to the Eglington Neighbourhood Plan post Regulation 14 are broadly positive. However, they are unlikely to lead to significant effects on any of the SEA Objectives and do not alter the overall findings set out in the Environmental Report that accompanied the Regulation 14 version of the Plan.

Regards

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