

22nd January, 2024

Hauxley Neighbourhood Plan Update

Strategic Environmental Assessment Addendum Note

Introduction

Following a Regulation 14 Consultation on the Hauxley 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:

- Greater reference to coastal environments and seascape (Policy H2, Policy H4)
- Introduction of a new policy dealing with coastal mitigation (Policy H1). This was made in response to recommendations in the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

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 Housing	Neutral effects
Health and Wellbeing	Moderate positive 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

Though there is greater reference given to coastal environments, and a new policy on relation to the coastal mitigation service, this does not add anything substantial to the existing policy context (i.e. the Northumberland Local Plan already sets a suitable framework for coastal mitigation). The changes could perhaps bring greater focus on alternative measures for mitigating the effects of development rather than contributions to the mitigation service. However, effects are likely to be minimal.

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

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

Landscape

The changes could serve to better highlight the need to protect coastal features in the landscape, but this would likely be picked up through the current policy context. Therefore, whilst the changes are positive in terms of landscape, they would not have a significant effect and the findings within the environmental report remain the same.

Population and community

The proposed changes are not directly related to population and community factors and are unlikely to have any significant effects. The changes are not more onerous with regards to contribution to coastal mitigation, and therefore it is unlikely that there would be a detrimental effect upon residential and tourism related developments.

Health and Wellbeing

The proposed changes are not directly related to health and wellbeing and are unlikely to have any significant effects.

Conclusion

The changes to the Hauxley Neighbourhood Plan post Regulation 14 are broadly positive, but the effects are limited to the biodiversity and landscape objectives. The changes are relatively minor, 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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