



Hertfordshire County Council

Assessment of the Requirement for Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

Minerals Local Plan

December 2018

Executive Summary

The Minerals Local Plan (MLP) sets out the spatial portrait of Hertfordshire together with the vision and objectives for mineral development in the county during the 15 year period. A number of assessments and appraisals need to be undertaken as part of the development of the plan, identifying risks and establishing mitigation.

A Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the requirements of the European Union (EU), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive has been carried out, and this highlights the likely environmental effects and assesses the wider social and economic factors related to the MLP. The SA objective relating to human health/health and wellbeing states the need to protect and improve health and amenity for individuals and communities within Hertfordshire.

There is no statutory duty to undertake Health Impact Assessment, however, it is recognised by the county council that individual site proposals that come forward through the Minerals Local Plan may have the potential to impact on health and that these may be a concern to members of the public.

It is not possible at this stage to identify the range of health impacts for individual mineral sites and therefore it is recommended that all applications will be expected to submit a HIA to assess all potential impacts on health as a result of any proposed development.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hertfordshire County Council is the Minerals Planning Authority (MPA) for the county of Hertfordshire. The county council has a statutory responsibility to plan for future minerals supply within Hertfordshire and determine proposals for the extraction of minerals and associated development.
- 1.2 Minerals are important natural resources which make an essential contribution to the nation's prosperity and quality of life. Sand, gravel, crushed rock, chalk and clay all provide the construction industry with the raw materials required for constructing and maintaining roads, buildings and other infrastructure.
- 1.3 The Minerals Local Plan has been prepared to meet these purposes, setting out the spatial portrait of Hertfordshire, vision and objectives for minerals development in the county during a 15 year period, and policies to implement the Plan's vision and objectives.
- 1.4 The stages of plan production can be lengthy and technical and have involved a number of formal and informal consultations.

Table 1 - Timetable for the Production of the Minerals Local Plan

2014-2015		Evidence Gathering
2015	Spring	Stakeholder event
2015	Summer	Initial Consultation publication
2016	Spring	Call for Sites
2017-2018	Winter	Draft Plan consultation
2019	January	Proposed Submission Plan publication
2019	Summer	Submission to Secretary of State
2020	Summer	Adoption of Minerals Local Plan.

- 1.5 When preparing a plan there are assessments and appraisals that need to be undertaken as part of the process. These assessments help to consider the implications of the policies within the plan, identify risks and help establish any mitigation.
- 1.6 The county council has to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to assess the potential impact of the Minerals Local Plan on the identified, protected characteristics. The EqIA identifies a number of potential differential or negative impacts relating to the proximity of sites to sensitive receptors, such as older people, pregnant women, young children and people with a pre-existing health condition such as breathing difficulties or noise sensitivity. The EqIA concludes that the potential impacts can be mitigated via the imposition of planning conditions.
- 1.7 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the requirements of the European Union (EU), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, has also been carried out to inform the ongoing preparation of the Plan and to ensure sustainable development concerns are fully integrated and alternative options are considered. Independent consultants, LUC, have undertaken the SA and prepared the required reports to be published alongside the Plan. The

SEA focuses on the likely environmental effects of a plan and the SA assesses the wider social and economic factors. The relevant SA objectives that relate to human health/health and wellbeing are set out below:

HEADLINE SA OBJECTIVES	Sub-objectives	
Social		
9. To protect and improve health and amenity for individuals and communities within Hertfordshire	9.1	To protect the health and amenity of local residents and communities from the impacts of minerals workings and associated transport
	9.2	To protect against the loss of Public Rights of Way, access, recreation areas and open space
	9.3	To provide opportunities to improve health and amenity through delivery of green infrastructure, enhanced public rights of way and improved access to recreation as part of the development and restoration of a site
	9.4	To ensure that mineral sites do not compromise the operation and safety of commercial/civil or military aerodromes

1.8 The Strategic Environmental Assessment also identifies 'Human Health' as one of its themes and links this to the SA objectives as follows:

SEA Themes	Sub-objectives covered under each theme	
Human Health	5.1	To reduce operational emissions through improved/enhanced technologies and sustainable transport.
	9.1	To protect the health and amenity of local residents and communities from the impacts of minerals workings.
	9.2	To protect against the loss of Public Rights of Way, recreation areas and open space.
	9.3	To provide opportunities to improve health and amenity through delivery of green infrastructure, enhanced public rights of way and improved access to recreation as part of the development and restoration of a site.
	9.4	To ensure that mineral sites do not compromise the operation and safety of commercial/civil or military aerodromes.

1.9 Having undertaken an appraisal in line with that required for SEA/SA, in relation to human health/health and wellbeing, the reports have concluded the following:

- The policies and site allocations in the MLP have been subject to a detailed appraisal against the SA objectives which were developed at the scoping stage of the SA process.
- The vision for the MLP is assessed as performing positively against most SA objectives.

- The objectives of the MLP are generally expected to have either positive or negligible sustainability effects.
- The policies of the MLP are generally expected to result in a wide range of positive effects on the SA objectives
- Development management policies of the MLP are generally assessed as having neutral or positive sustainability effects.
- All of the proposed mineral allocations and Preferred Areas have the potential to generate positive effects through the delivery of green infrastructure, enhanced public rights of way and improved access to recreation as part of the development and restoration of a site.

1.10 An essential part of the Mineral Local Plan process is the identification of sites in order to meet the future need for sand and gravel. In order to identify the most suitable sites, the county council has undertaken a site selection study. This study assessed sites against a number of criteria, some of which are relevant to the human health/health and wellbeing.

1.11 It is recognised within the site selection study that any mineral extraction will have an impact. Sites have therefore been assessed as to the level of that impact which translates into a 'score'; red being a high impact, amber being a moderate impact or green being a low impact. There is also a dark green score for positive impacts and dark red for very high impact. The table below sets out the full description key.

Key

Score	Description
Positive	There are positive impacts or benefits/enhancements.
Low	There are no/insignificant impact(s)/ issue(s).
Medium	There is a minor/moderate impact/issue which may be acceptable (and may involve mitigation).
High	There is a major impact/issue which may or may not be adequately mitigated.
Very High	There is an impact on a site or area of international or national significance within which working will only be permitted once an exception or alternative test in national policy have been met.

1.12 The criterion of relevance to human health/health and wellbeing relate to the proximity of potential sites to existing or allocated built development and sensitive land uses. These criteria are used to assess the potential conflict between mineral extraction and other land uses as a result of noise, dust, vibration, visual impact and particle emissions.

Criterion	Justification	Scoring	Data available
Proximity of allocated residential or built development	There could be potential for land use conflict where minerals sites are within or in close proximity to areas allocated for future residential or built development, as mineral resources could be sterilised or mineral operations could conflict with the neighbouring sensitive land uses. Mineral sterilisation could be avoided via prior extraction. Conflict between mineral operations and sensitive land uses could be mitigated by the use of stand-off distances, noise bunds and visual screening. However, the potential for this to occur would not be known until the planning application stage for either land use.	N/A	Data on housing allocations from HCC.
		Sites or areas are located away from planned built development.	Visual analysis of relevant Local Plan maps for areas planned for future residential development, however, the certainty of these development locations depends on the status of the Local Plan in question, i.e. how close to Adoption it is.
		Sites or areas are located in close proximity to or adjacent to planned built development.	
		Sites or areas are located within the boundary of planned built development.	
		N/A	

Criterion	Justification	Scoring	Data available
Sensitive land uses	Minerals sites could have effects on the health and amenity of local residents and communities from dust, noise and vibration. The NPPF is clear that MPAs should ensure that unavoidable noise, dust and particle emissions and any blasting vibrations are controlled and mitigated or removed at source. Past (e.g. Minerals Policy Statement 2) and current guidance (e.g. NPPF) state that residential properties and other sensitive uses can be affected by dust up to 1km from the source, and that concerns are most likely to be experienced near to sources, generally within 100m depending on site characteristics and in the absence of appropriate mitigation.	N/A	Visual analysis of Ordnance Survey (OS) base maps.
		Sites or areas are distant from sensitive land uses.	
		Sites or areas are in close proximity to sensitive land uses.	
		Sites or areas are located adjacent to or within the boundary of sensitive land uses.	
		N/A	

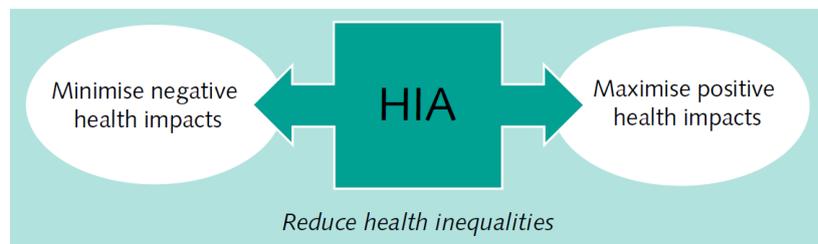
1.13 Minerals can only be worked where they naturally occur and this will result in the mineral being transported off site to where it is needed by the market. This may also have an impact on the air and water along any transport routes, this potential impact is assessed and given a score.

Criterion	Justification	Scoring	Data available
Sustainable transport and pollution to the environment (dust, air, water)	<p>Environmental receptors, including humans, are protected from pollution through a number of planning and environmental regulations. Mineral workings have the potential to result to pollution of water courses, aquifers and the air. However, there are strict environmental controls in place to prevent this occurring at the site level. Potential for adverse effects on surface water quality will be assessed at the planning application stage.</p> <p>Proposals for all types of minerals sites could contribute to increasing air pollution with regards to minerals transportation by road, as well as any air pollution associated with the operation of the sites and processes used such as dust from blasting, crushing and processing.</p> <p>The further vehicles transporting minerals have to travel along local roads (i.e. not on the primary road network), the higher the potential for more localised air pollution as they are likely to travel more slowly on local roads. In addition, if the mineral site is within, or vehicles are travelling through, AQMAs where existing air pollution issues have been identified, there is more potential for negative effects on air quality.</p>	N/A	<p>Visual analysis of Ordnance Survey (OS) base maps.</p> <p>GIS information from HCC.</p> <p>Information provided through the Call for Sites.</p>
		Sites or areas where associated traffic would not be likely to travel through an Air Quality Management Area, or are located adjacent to a strategic road network.	
		Sites or areas where associated traffic would be likely to travel through an Air Quality Management Area, or are in close proximity to a strategic road network.	
		Sites or areas located within an Air Quality Management Area, or not in close proximity to a strategic road network.	
		N/A	

1.14 The site selection study does not replace the need for specific impact assessments which may also be required, together with an Environmental Impact Assessment, at the planning application stage (if the sites are bought forward).

2. Why undertake a Health Impact Assessment?

- 2.1 Health, or more importantly what constitutes good health, is difficult to define and measure in all its aspects for a population, not least because perceptions regarding health and expectations of good health vary.
- 2.2 While there is no statutory duty to undertake a HIA at the planning stage, it is recognised by the county council that there are potential health impacts relating to mineral extraction and that these may be of concern to members of the public.
- 2.2 A health impact assessment (HIA) is defined by the World Health Organisation as 'a combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, programme or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population.'



Department of Health, 2010

- 2.3 The objective of an HIA is to:
- Determine the potential health impacts of a proposal, including identifying inequality issues;
 - Identify ways to maximise positive and minimise negative impacts; and
 - Inform the decision making process, responding to health issues raised.
- 2.4 The HIA process is similar to that of the sustainability appraisal:
- **Establishing a baseline**
 - **Screening** is the process of asking a series of questions to establish whether there are likely to be any health impacts.
 - **Scoping** is the process of examining baseline data and identifying relevant health priorities that are directly related to an application.
 - **Appraisal and Reporting** is the process of identifying and assessing the health impacts which a proposal may have on the health priorities.
 - **Monitoring** is the process of checking any impacts which have been identified as part of the HIA on a regular basis and making further if required.

- 2.4 The health and wellbeing of individuals and communities is influenced by a range of factors. The basis of the HIA is therefore a broad 'socio-economic model' of health taking into account a number of factors, known as determinants of health, including:
- age and genetics;
 - individual life style factors;
 - living and working conditions; and
 - general socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions.
- 2.5 When conducting the HIA, the effect of a proposal on these health determinants is considered via health pathways. A health pathway can be described as any activity that influences a known determinant of health.
- 2.6 Planning regulates land use and thus has great potential to influence health. Planning is, in turn, required to undertake impact assessments. The revised EU, EIA Directive was transposed into UK legislation in May 2017 and establishes that human health is a core area for assessment.
- 2.7 'Human health' is not broadly defined and existing legislation has a narrow focus on aspects of the physical environment such as air, water and noise. There are increasing calls for ensuring that planning decisions seek explicitly to improve health and to contribute to the wider public health. HIA is one way of enabling planning decisions to take health into account. There are many guides to assist practitioners in conducting an HIA and a number of local examples of HIA in planning. For more information contact publichealth@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Department of Health ⁱ provides a list of suggested questions to be used for screening. By answering these questions the need for a HIA can be determined; if the screening results in two questions being answered 'yes' to potential health impacts then the further stages of HIA are necessary.

Screening Questions
Will the proposal have a direct impact on health, mental health and wellbeing?
Will the policy have an impact on social, economic and environmental living conditions that would indirectly affect health?
Will the proposal affect an individual's ability improve their own health and wellbeing?
Will there be a change in demand for or access to health and social care services?
Will the proposal have an impact on global health?

- 3.2 The Minerals Local Plan as a policy framework will not have a direct impact on health and wellbeing. However, any individual site proposals that come forward in line with this framework may have the potential to impact on health and wellbeing.

Recommendation

- 3.3 It is not possible at this stage of plan making to identify the possible range of health impacts from individual sites. The need to undertake a full Health Impact Assessment for site specific proposals should be assessed via the screening process and in consultation with the county council. The Minerals Planning Authority and Public Health will expect any HIA to be undertaken in a timely manner.

ⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-impact-assessment-tools>