

Health Impact Assessment

**Hertfordshire Minerals and Waste
Local Plan 2040**

Hertfordshire County Council



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary4

1. Introduction5

2. The Requirement for a Health Impact Assessment10

3. Recommendations13

Executive Summary

The Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) sets out the spatial portrait of Hertfordshire together with the vision and objectives for mineral and waste development in the county during the plan 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 MWLP. The SA objective relating to human health and wellbeing states that the Plan will '*protect and positively contribute towards human health and wellbeing*' 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 proposals for minerals and waste management development that come forward may have the potential to impact on health, and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan should address these.

It is not possible at this stage to identify the full range of health impacts for individual minerals or waste developments, therefore it is recommended that applications¹ will be expected to submit a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to assess potential impacts on health likely to arise as a result of any proposed development.

¹ which meet the thresholds identified in the council's Position Statement of Health Impact Assessment (October 2019), available at hertfordshire.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The county council is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority (MWPA) for Hertfordshire. The county council has a statutory responsibility to plan for future minerals supply and waste management development within Hertfordshire and determine proposals for minerals and waste developments.
- 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. Waste management is an integral part of daily life, whether it is generated within the home or through industrial and mineral related activities. The effective management of this material is crucial in meeting the environmental objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy for Waste; driving waste up the Waste Hierarchy, managing materials in line with the Circular Economy and reducing the quantity of wastes generated.
- 1.4. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan has been prepared to meet these purposes, setting out the spatial portrait of Hertfordshire, vision and objectives for minerals and waste development in the county until 2040, and policies to implement the Plan's vision and objectives.
- 1.5. The stages of plan production can be lengthy and technical and involve several formal consultations. The timeline for the production of the MWLP is set out in the Minerals and Waste Development Scheme²:

Stage of Plan Production	Date
Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report Consultation	February 2022
Public Consultation (Regulation 18 Draft)	June – July 2022
Proposed Submission Publication (Regulation 19 Publication)	March – April 2023
Submission (Regulation 22)	July 2023
Independent Examination	October 2023
Inspector's Report	December 2023
Adoption	February 2024

² Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (December 2021)

- 1.6. 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.
- 1.7. The county council must undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to assess the potential impact of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan on the identified and protected characteristics. The EqIA identifies a number of potential differential or negative impacts relating to the consultations and engagement events on sensitive receptors, such as older people, pregnant women, young children and people with a pre-existing health condition and race. The EqIA concludes that minimal equality impacts may arise during engagement events and consultations linked to the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. It is considered that these potential impacts can be addressed and mitigated through correct consultation procedures and therefore no changes are required to the Plan.
- 1.8. 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. The Minerals and Waste Planning Authority has undertaken the SA and prepared the required reports to be published alongside the Plan. The SEA (which forms part of the SA process) focuses on the likely environmental effects of a plan and the SA as a whole assesses the wider social and economic factors. The relevant SA/Plan objective, along with the sub-objectives, that relate to human health and wellbeing are set out below:

Objective	Sub-Objective / Criteria for Assessing the Effects
7. Protect and positively contribute towards human health and wellbeing	<p>7.1. Avoid or minimise adverse effects on human health and safety to acceptable levels</p> <p>7.2. Provide opportunities to improve health and amenity through delivery of green and blue infrastructure, enhanced public rights of way and improved access to recreation.</p> <p>7.3. Avoid or minimise adverse effects on the quality and extent of existing recreational assets.</p> <p>7.4. Reduce the incidence of crime associated with waste (e.g. fly-tipping and illegal dumping of large volumes of waste).</p> <p>7.5. Ensure that mineral sites (including their afteruse) do not compromise the operation and safety of aerodromes</p> <p>7.6. Safeguard residential amenity by minimising noise, light and air pollution from activities associated with mineral and waste development</p>

1.9. Having undertaken an appraisal in line with that required for SA/SEA, in relation to human 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 outcomes of the SA show that the preferred policies will bring many positive benefits. The appraisal resulted in some mitigation measures being recommended for a select few of the preferred policies. Development Management policies of the MLP are generally assessed as having neutral or positive sustainability effects.
- The three Minerals Allocation Sites (MAS) identified within the Plan have been assessed and are considered appropriate for inclusion within the Plan, based on previous site assessment work.

1.10. An essential part of the Mineral and Waste Local Plan process is the identification of sites in order to both meet the future need for sand and gravel. In order to identify the most suitable minerals sites, the county council has undertaken a Site Selection Study (August 2018). This study assessed sites against a number of criteria, some of which are relevant to the human health and wellbeing and subjected them to a full SA. The Site Selection/SA process to assess the sites used a slightly different

methodology to the SA for the Plan, however the scoring has been aligned with the scoring in the Plan's SA and is shown in the table below.

Plan SA Scoring System		Site Selection Scoring System	
Likely significant positive effect	++	Positive	There are positive impacts or benefits/enhancements
Likely minor positive effect	+		
Likely negligible or no effect	0	Low	There are no/insignificant impact(s)/ issue(s)
Likely mixed effect	+/-		
Likely minor negative effect	-	Medium	There is a minor/moderate impact/issue which may be acceptable (and may involve mitigation)
Likely significant negative effect	--	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
Effects of the policy are uncertain	?		

1.11. Using the above SA Scoring System, the three Minerals Allocation Sites (MAS) have been scored against the following criterion linking to Objective 7 of the Plan/SA:

Sieve 3 Site Assessment Criterion	Link to SA Objectives
Airport Safeguarding Zones	7
Cumulative Effects	7
Proximity of Allocated Residential or Build Development	3, 7, 8
Recreation	7
Sensitive Land Uses	7
Pollution to the Environment (dust, air, water)	5, 7,8

1.12. The SA report also details several key sustainability issues that are relevant to health impacts and the Objective 7 sub-objectives as listed above:

Topic	Key Sustainability Issue
Air Quality	Poor air quality is experienced in a number of areas in Hertfordshire and 34 AQMAs have been declared.
Crime	Hertfordshire generally has a low level of crime; however, there is a disparity between amount of crime in the most deprived areas and the least deprived areas.
Culture, Leisure and Recreation	Improved provision and connectivity of recreational resources (be that to linear routes, open space, or recreational facilities) is required.
Health	Health inequalities exist between the least and most deprived areas of the county.

1.13. The MWLP does not identify new sites for waste management uses. The MWLP identifies broad locations upon which proposals for new waste management development will be supported in principle. One location is existing waste management sites. The other types of locations are on allocated and existing employment land areas, based upon the employment land within the ten district and borough local plans. This means that the employment areas have existing employment uses upon them. Should waste management proposals come forward on these sites, they would be subject to the planning application process and may have to undertake a HIA in line with the thresholds stated within the county council's Position Statement on HIA³.

³ Position Statement of Health Impact Assessment (October 2019), available at hertfordshire.gov.uk

2. The Requirement for 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 plan preparation stage, it is recognised by the county council that there are potential health impacts relating to minerals and waste development and that these may be of concern to members of the public.
- 2.3. 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.’
- 2.4. 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.
- 2.5. The HIA process is similar to that of the sustainability appraisal in the following ways:
 - Establish 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.

2.6. Hertfordshire County Council has published a Health Impact Assessment Position Statement⁴ which outlines the county council's stance on HIAs in relation to planning.

2.7. The Statement sets out clear guidance to planners and developers in the absence of national guidelines for HIAs, intending to establish a consistent approach and increase the quality of HIAs submitted with planning applications. Within the Statement there are thresholds for when a HIA will be required. Specifically, the Statement includes thresholds for mineral and waste development proposals:

Minerals

- New rail aggregate depots
- New minerals workings where the surface area of the workings is being increased
- Other permanent infrastructure such as coated stone plants or ready-mix plants.

Waste

- landfill of waste other than inert waste
- Thermal treatment of waste, or chemical treatment of waste
- Hazardous waste management installations
- Composting of waste over 10,000 tonnes green waste per annum
- Anaerobic digester
- Super household waste recycling centre

2.8. It should be noted that a HIA is required in support of the above development types, even if a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required. The council believes that a separate HIA assesses health in a broader sense than that which is covered by assessments of impacts on human health and wellbeing within EIAs, giving consideration to a wider range of determinants.

2.9. 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.

⁴ Position Statement of Health Impact Assessment (October 2019), available at hertfordshire.gov.uk

- 2.10. 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.
- 2.11. 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.
- 2.12. '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 several local examples of HIA in planning.

For more information contact publichealth@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. The Department of Health⁵ provides a list of suggested questions to be used for screening. By answering these questions (and not withstanding the requirement to carry out HIA based on the development types listed above) 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 and Waste Local Plan as a policy framework will not have a direct impact on health and wellbeing. However, any individual development 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 minerals and waste development proposals. The need to undertake a full Health Impact Assessment for site specific proposals should be assessed against the thresholds set out within the county council's Position Statement on Health Impact Assessment, in consultation with the county council, and the Department of Health questions as listed above. The Minerals and Waste Planning Authority and Public Health will expect any HIA to be undertaken in a timely manner.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-impact-assessment-tools>