

Plymouth City Council

Local Development Framework North Plymstock (including Minerals) Area Action Plan

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

Environmental Statement

Introduction

Plymouth City Council adopted the North Plymstock (including Minerals) Area Action Plan on 6th August 2007. As part of the adoption procedures under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, Regulation 16 (3) and (4) requires a Statement to be produced on the adoption of any plan or programme to which the regulations apply. This statement explains how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme; how the environmental report has been taken into account; how public consultation responses have been taken into account; and how the significant environmental effects of implementing the plan or programme will be monitored. Through this statement it will be demonstrated that the plan adopted is the most sustainable, rather than other options considered.

Key Environmental Bodies

Throughout the process of carrying out a Sustainability Appraisal of the North Plymstock Area Action Plan, three key bodies are required to be consulted – the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England (formerly English Nature and the Countryside Agency). During the Sustainability Appraisal, comments from these bodies in particular have shaped the Appraisal and have been fed into the initial SEA/SA Scoping Report, the assessment of Issues and Options, Preferred Options, and the formulation of the North Plymstock Area Action Plan up to and including submission.

Integrating Environmental Considerations into the North Plymstock (including Minerals) Area Action Plan

In the course of its preparation, the North Plymstock Area Action Plan has been subject to a four-stage Sustainability Appraisal, which were completed independently by Land Use Consultants. The appraisal began with a Scoping Report in November 2004 (revised March 2005) following new statutory requirements, including the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Preliminary Sustainability Appraisal was then undertaken of the North Plymstock Area Action Plan Issues and Options, followed by Appraisal of the Preferred Options in July 2005, and finally the Submission Draft in July 2006.

At all times the Sustainability Appraisal was carried out in accordance with the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appraisal set out in European and UK legislation.

Taking the Environmental Report into Account

Issues and Options

At the Issues and Options stage, many options were considered in addressing the future spatial planning of North Plymstock. The key Issues and Options were outlined in the consultation documents, and these were subject to Sustainability Appraisal. The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that the options were appropriate in the context of North Plymstock. The Sustainability Appraisal also confirmed that none of the other alternatives offered significant benefits over the Preferred Options.

Preferred Options

Comprehensive consideration by the Council of the Issues and Options, including responses from stakeholders and the wider community consultation, led to the formulation and publication of Preferred Options. The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that while the North Plymstock Area Action Plan was generally positive, there were issues that needed to be addressed. The Council produced a Schedule of Responses to issues raised by the Appraisal, which indicated where changes would be made in the Submission Plan to resolve them. Changes are also highlighted in the Submission Draft Appraisal.

Submission Draft

The Submission Draft of the North Plymstock AAP contains substantially more detail than the previous Preferred Options Report. The Submission Draft was therefore appraised twice (in June and July 2006) to fully take account of the revisions. The Sustainability Appraisal (June 2006) concluded that substantial revisions have been made to the Area Action Plan for North Plymstock, including a number of improvements designed specifically to mitigate potential adverse effects noted in the July 2005 SEA/SA of the Preferred Options document. The results of the Sustainability Appraisal indicate that whilst the Area Action Plan is generally positive, there is still a need to ensure that the actual process of implementation is properly planned and overseen by the City Council, or its agents.

The Sustainability Appraisal of the Submission Draft (July 2006) summed up the comments that have been made throughout the SEA/SA process on the sustainability and potential social, environmental and economic impacts that could result from the strategies, plans, objectives, policies, targets and proposals contained in the Submission Draft of the North Plymstock Area Action Plan. The Appraisal concluded that substantial revisions had been made to the North Plymstock Area Action Plan Submission Draft (July 2006), including a number of improvements designed specifically to mitigate potential

adverse effects noted by the SEA/SA of the previous version of the Submission Draft (June 2006). The results of the SEA/SA indicate that the AAP has largely addressed the recommendations of the previous SEA/SA and therefore broadly conforms to the Sustainability Objectives. The Appraisal noted that consideration would need to be given to the requirements of the Habitats Directive in relation to Natura 2000 sites.

North Plymstock (including Minerals) Area Action Plan Public Examination

The Council's Sustainability Appraisal was subject to Soundness Test 3 by a Planning Inspector who undertook a public examination of the North Plymstock Area Action Plan including the Sustainability Appraisal. The Inspector concluded that each stage of the Plan had been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, and the submitted Plan had been subject to a satisfactory Strategic Environmental Assessment. The third Test of Soundness has therefore been met. The Council also submitted to the examination a Habitat Regulations Assessment for the North Plymstock Area Action Plan. This identified a number of changes that were required to ensure that possible adverse effects of the Area Action Plan upon the Plymouth Sound & Estuaries European Marine Site are avoided. These changes have been incorporated into the Area Action Plan.

Public Consultation

The consultations for the plan itself and the Sustainability Appraisal were conducted in parallel. The process completed was as follows. The North Plymstock (including Minerals) Area Action Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, which require that a Development Plan Document is accompanied by a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Plymouth's SCI was adopted in July 2006 and the North Plymstock (including Minerals) Area Action Plan meets all of its requirements. The Plan has been through two major stages of consultation – Issues and Options in March/April 2005, and Preferred Options in July 2005. A full statement of the Council's pre-submission consultation on the North Plymstock Area Action Plan (Regulation 28 Statement) is available from the Council. Consultation took a variety of forms including: an LDF launch event in February 2004; public reports and associated questionnaires; public exhibitions; presentations to Area Committee meetings; a DVD 'An Invitation to Aspire'; advertisements in the 'Evening Herald' local newspaper; consultation events; focus groups; articles in community newsletters. Documents were available in paper form at the main Council offices, local libraries and Council housing offices. They were also available on the Council website.

The Council has considered all the representations received. The Preferred Options and Submission stage representations were summarised individually and responded to in Schedules of Responses.

Monitoring

The Local Development Framework for Plymouth is to be kept under continuous review. In order for this to happen, an Annual Monitoring Report is required to be submitted to Government Office. The Annual Monitoring Report makes provision for monitoring the sustainability of the North Plymouth Area Action Plan as it is implemented during the period of the Local Development Framework up to 2021. In addition to an extensive monitoring framework included in the AAP itself, the Sustainability Appraisal includes a framework for monitoring a number of key effects of the Local Development Framework. These include development in flood risk areas, and over-pricing of property in district centres and desirable locations like the waterside which could price out existing local residents (see Section 3 of the Submission Draft SEA/SA Report).

Links to North Plymouth (including Minerals) Area Action Plan Documents (as at 10/08/07)

Issues and Options:

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/i_o_07_north_plymstock_vr_ammended_web.pdf

Sustainability Appraisal of Issues and Options:

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sa_i_o_07_-_north_plymstock_aap.pdf

Issues and Options consultation responses:

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/07_responses_to_the_north_plymstock_area_action_plan.pdf

Preferred Options:

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/po_plymstock_web_version.pdf

Sustainability Appraisal of Preferred Options:

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/north_plymstock_preferred_options_sea_report_read_only.pdf

Preferred Options Consultation Response Schedule: Please contact the Council.

Submitted:

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/environmentandplanning/planning/planningpolicy/ldf/ldfareaactionplans/ldfnorthplymstockaap/northplymstocksubmission.htm>

Submission Response Schedule: Please contact the Council.

Sustainability Appraisal of Submission Draft:

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/environmental_report_of_north_plymstock_aap_submission.pdf

Regulation 28 Statement: Please contact the Council.

Scoping Report:

http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sea-sa_scoping_report_read_only.pdf