



PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
(LOCAL PLANNING) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2012**

REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION

**CUMBRIA MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN
2014 to 2029**

SITE ASSESSMENTS

FEBRUARY 2015

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INTRODUCTION

1. Cumbria County Council is preparing the Cumbria Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP), which will replace the adopted Core Strategy and adopted Development Control Policies (2009) and the draft Site Allocations Policies (2012) in the Cumbria Minerals and Waste Development Framework. The MWLP will guide minerals and waste development in Cumbria over the period 2014 to 2029.
2. This Site Assessments document provides supporting information for the Local Plan, along with the Habitats Regulations Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal. The assessments have also been used to inform both the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment, in order to identify key issues and to predict what the likely effects of policies, and the sites within them, would be on those issues.
3. The Site Assessments document focuses on the specific sites that have been included in the Site Allocations Policies section of the MWLP. The alternative sites that have been considered during the preparation of the Site Allocations Policies, for the Development Framework as well as the Local Plan, are also listed in this report.
4. The site allocation areas for waste management and minerals are indicative of the land available, and do not necessarily imply that the entire footprint of an allocation would be developed. In many cases a larger area is identified in order to provide the scope to incorporate undeveloped or enhanced areas for habitats and species, or to provide linkages in a functional ecological network.
5. The site assessment provided a mechanism for reviewing and scoring each of the proposed sites against the sustainability criteria and for assessing the likely environmental, social and economic impacts of each site. It allowed an in-depth and informed discussion to be held, where the context of each of the sites was analysed and assessed. This was carried out by County Council specialist minerals and waste planners, an officer with specialist knowledge of sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment and with inputs from other specialists, e.g. on Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and biodiversity.
6. The assessment enabled the sustainability objectives and criteria (set out in the Sustainability Appraisal), as well as the site location criteria (set out in Table 3.7 of the Local Plan), to be explored in terms of how the proposed sites related to them. Reference was also made to the need for Habitats Regulations Assessment, where development may have impacts on European Wildlife Sites. Local knowledge and expertise added weight to this approach.
7. The County Council's in-house GIS was used, in order to establish the type and level of constraints and opportunities for each site. The GIS layers that were used are listed below. They provide a description of the context of a site and this was backed up by site visits. A 2km radius around the sites was used in the assessments. The assessment of sites is at a less detailed level than that needed for planning applications and Environmental Impact Assessments.

- Address Point (to identify residential properties);
 - Special Protection Areas (including potential SPAs);
 - Special Areas of Conservation (including possible SACs);
 - Ramsar sites (including proposed Ramsar);
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - consultation zone for a Site of Special Scientific Interest;
 - National, Local, Cumbria Wildlife Trust and RSPB nature reserves;
 - Ancient Woodlands;
 - UK Priority Habitats;
 - Key Species Interest;
 - County Wildlife Sites;
 - special roadside verges
 - European and Global Geoparks;
 - Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS);
 - Limestone Pavement Orders;
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - National Park boundaries;
 - Heritage Coast;
 - Marine Conservation Zones;
 - Landscape Character Areas;
 - Registered Historic Parks and Gardens;
 - Conservation Areas;
 - listed buildings;
 - Registered Historic Battlefields;
 - World Heritage Site and its Visual Impact Zone;
 - Scheduled Monuments;
 - flood maps;
 - cycle routes;
 - safeguarding areas;
 - agricultural land classification;
 - public rights of way.
8. Consideration was given to including Groundwater Source Protection Zones. However, these cover only a very small proportion of private water sources. It would be misleading to give weight to sites that are not within the small number of Zones that have been formally defined, but which may potentially affect equally important water resources. This is a matter that will have to be assessed in detail in planning applications and Environmental Impact Assessments.
9. Inevitably, the site assessment process involved some subjective judgements. For example, about the likely impacts of a particular type of development, the scale of those impacts or the sensitivity of an environmental asset to impacts. To ensure transparency in the assessment process, the assessment matrices are included, with their supporting text.

KEY TO SITE SCORING MATRIX

- ✓✓ The site scores very positively against the criterion.
- ✓ The site scores positively against the criterion.
- XX The site scores very negatively against the criterion.
- X The site scores negatively against the criterion.
- ? There is too much uncertainty to score the site against the criterion.
- 0 The site has no impact on the criterion.

10. The Habitats Regulations Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal also address each site, and are available in separate documents. The Sustainability Appraisal, however, has been developed together with this document in an iterative process that has informed the choices about which sites to include in the Local Plan.
11. The majority of sites allocated in the Local Plan policies score positively. This is because many of the alternative sites considered that did not score positively, were rejected at an earlier stage – see Alternative sites considered, under each district.

