

Essex County Council (ECC) Minerals Local Plan (MLP) as amended (2021) Regulation 18



Sustainability Appraisal (SA) – Non Technical Summary

February 2021





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Glossary

Term (abbreviation)	Definition
Aftercare	The steps to be taken following restoration to bring land to the required standard for its intended use once mineral working or landfill has taken place, and its subsequent maintenance.
Aggregates	Sand, gravel, crushed rock and other bulk materials used by the construction industry.
Aggregate Working Party	Established in the 1970's to identify and consider problems in the supply of aggregates. They provide technical advice in relation to the supply of, and demand for, aggregates (including sand, gravel and crushed rock) to the Secretary of State, local government and mineral planning authorities.
Annual Monitoring Report	A yearly report submitted to the government by the Local Planning Authority/ Minerals Planning Authority assessing progress with, and the effectiveness of, the Local Development Framework.
Apportionment	This is the 'amount of minerals needed'. The splitting of national supply guidelines for minerals demand between Minerals Planning Authorities or sub regions.
Appropriate Assessment (AA)	The process and documentation associated with the statutory requirement under the EU Appropriate Assessment Habitats and Species Directive.
Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land	Land identified by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) as falling within classification grades 1, 2 or 3a, based on the physical characteristics of the land and the limits these impose upon its agricultural uses.
Blue Infrastructure	Blue landscape elements are linked to water. Examples include pools, ponds and pond systems, artificial buffer basins, Sustainable Drainage Systems and water courses.
Borrow Pit	A temporary mineral working to supply material for a specific construction project.

Term (abbreviation)	Definition
Construction, Demolition and Excavation (CD&E) Wastes	Controlled (predominantly inert) waste arising from the construction, repair, maintenance and demolition of buildings and structures and the excavation of minerals. It mostly includes brick, concrete, hardcore, subsoil and topsoil, but can include timber, metal, plastics and occasionally special hazardous waste materials.
Development Management (DM)	The process whereby a Local Planning Authority manages development by considering the merits of a planning application and determines the application, having regard to the Development Plan and all other material considerations.
Development Plan	A document setting out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land and buildings in the authority's area. This includes adopted Local Plans, neighbourhood plans and the London Plan, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. (Regional strategies remain part of the development plan until they are abolished by Order using powers taken in the Localism Act.
East of England Aggregates Working Party	The Aggregates Working Party that Essex County Council is a member of through being the Minerals Planning Authority for the county.
Environment Agency (EA)	A body that aims to prevent or minimise the effects of pollution on the environment and issues permits to monitor and control activities that handle or produce waste. It also provides up-to-date information on waste management and deals with other matters such as water issues, including flood protection advice.
Historic England (HE)	Advisors with responsibility for all aspects of protecting and promoting the historic environment. Historic England is responsible for advising the government on the listing of historic assets.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Statement (ES)	Applicants for certain types of development, usually more significant schemes, are required to submit an environmental statement accompanying a planning application. This evaluates the likely environmental impacts of the development, together with an assessment of how the severity of the impacts could be mitigated.

Term (abbreviation)	Definition
Examination in Public (EiP)	A term given to the public examination of Development Plan Documents
Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) / Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	An assessment of the flooding risk in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered. A SFRA is undertaken at the Plan level.
Green Infrastructure (GI)	Green infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands and also street trees, allotments, private gardens, green roofs and walls, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and soils. It can include rivers, streams, canals and other water bodies, sometimes called 'blue infrastructure'.
Groundwater	An important part of the natural water cycle present underground, within strata known as aquifers.
Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)	The assessment of the impacts of implementing a plan or policy on a Habitats site. It considers the impacts of a land use plan or project against the conservation objectives of the site and ascertains whether any impacts would adversely affect the integrity of them.
Habitats Site	As per the NPPF, any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.
Landbank	In the context of the Minerals Local Plan (MLP) this is the stock of planning permissions for the winning and working of minerals.
Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA)	Aids in the planning of a steady and adequate supply of minerals by assessing historic sales data and accounting for all potential supply options. The assessment is produced by the Minerals Planning Authority (MPA) and incorporates the advice of the relevant Aggregates Working Party (AWP).
Local Plan	A Development Plan Document prepared by district and other local planning authorities, including minerals and waste planning authorities, to guide development in their administrative area.

Term (abbreviation)	Definition
Local Planning Authority (LPA)	The local authority or council that is empowered by law to exercise planning functions. Often the local borough/ district/ city council. County councils are the authority for waste and minerals matters.
Low Level Restoration	The re-establishment of land following mineral extraction to a lower level with partial or no infilling (filling the hole created by extraction).
Mineral Consultation Area (MCA)	An area designated up to 100m around Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs), identified in order to ensure consultation with the relevant Minerals Planning Authority (MPA), on applications for non-mineral development in that area located in close proximity to safeguarded land that may compromise the potential future working of that land.
Minerals Development	Any development primarily involving the extraction, processing, storage, transportation or manufacture of minerals. It includes associated minerals development such as rail aggregate depots, facilities for aggregate recycling, secondary processing facilities and coastal wharves for mineral transshipment.
Mineral Extraction	Refers to the quarrying of mineral and the ancillary development associated with this such as processing plants, site offices and weighbridges.
Minerals Hierarchy	The minerals hierarchy sets out the different approaches to the supply of minerals, and orders them in terms of their sustainability. The most sustainable option is to reduce the amount of minerals used, followed by sourcing minerals from secondary and recycled materials, and finally through the primary extraction of minerals.
Mineral Infrastructure	Mineral Infrastructure applies to mineral facilities that are involved in the working and distribution of mineral resources.
Mineral Infrastructure Impact Assessments	Minerals Infrastructure Impact Assessments assess both the potential impact of a nonmineral led development on proximal safeguarded mineral infrastructure, and the impact of the latter on the former, to understand what mitigation measures may be required such that the operations of the mineral infrastructure are not compromised. The assessment should be carried out at such a time as to be capable of informing the planning application that it supports.'

Term (abbreviation)	Definition
Mineral Infrastructure Consultation Areas (MICA)	Mineral Infrastructure Consultation Areas cover land up to 250m from safeguarded mineral infrastructure. Where non-mineral development is proposed within Minerals Consultation Areas, the appropriate Planning Authority must consult the Mineral Planning Authority and the application be informed by a Minerals Infrastructure Impact Assessment.
Minerals Local Plan (MLP)	A statutory development plan prepared by a Minerals Planning Authority setting out policies for the control of development constituting of the winning and working of minerals, or the deposit of mineral waste.
Mineral Planning Authority (MPA)	The planning authority responsible for planning control of minerals development. Essex County Council is the MPA for Essex.
Mineral Resource	A potential mineral deposit where the quality and quantity of material present has not been tested.
Mineral Reserves	Mineral deposits which have been tested to establish the quality and quantity of material present and which could be economically and technically exploited.
Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA)	An area designated by Minerals Planning Authorities which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)	Sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.
Natural Capital	Natural capital is another term for the stock of renewable and non-renewable resources (e.g. plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals) that combine to yield a flow of benefits to people.
Natural England (NE)	Body formed by bringing together English Nature, the landscape, access and recreation elements of the Countryside Agency and the environmental land management functions of the Rural Development Service.

Term (abbreviation)	Definition
Permitted Reserves	Mineral deposits with the benefit of planning permission for extraction.
Preferred Site	An area containing mineral resources identified within this Plan where there is a strong presumption in favour of extraction.
Recycled Aggregates	Aggregates comprising waste materials (for example damaged bricks, broken concrete, brickwork, masonry and tarmac) from roads, construction and demolition sites that have been recovered and recycled in the form of manufactured materials such as concrete, brick, plasterboard and ceramic articles.
Restoration (in terms of minerals operations)	The method used to positively enhance a site once mineral extraction has ceased. This could be to restore the site to its original state or another suitable use, by filling the void to former levels, flooding the void or using low level restoration techniques.
Special Area Of Conservation (SAC)	A site designated under the European Community Habitats Directive, to protect internationally important natural habitats and species.
Statutory	Required by law (statute), usually through an Act of Parliament.
Sterilisation	When development or land use changes prevent possible mineral exploitation in the foreseeable future.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	SEAs integrate environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes. They are required by the European Directive 2000/42/EC “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment” (the SEA Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive). Government guidance considers that it is possible to satisfy the requirements for Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and SEA through a single approach provided that the requirements of the SEA Directive are met. The environmental, economic and social effects of the plan are presented in the form of an iterative Environmental Report which informs each consultation stage of the Minerals Local Plan’s development.
Traffic Assessment (TA)	The Local Validation Checklist states that a Transport Assessment (TA) is to be required where there is likely to be a significant amount of traffic generated. This is defined as generating in excess of 50pcu (passenger car units (PCU’s)) in the peak hour. PCU’s are a Traffic Assessment calculation of all

Term (abbreviation)	Definition
	<p>types of vehicles as car equivalents: an HGV is 2 car units. Mineral sites generate few car movements, but often significant volumes of Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) traffic. This can have major impacts on neighbouring residents and businesses, and is often the cause of most local concern. A TA forms part of an Environmental Statement submitted with most applications requiring Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). However smaller developments not requiring an EIA do not submit a TA.</p>
<p>Traffic Statement (TS)</p>	<p>A short, straightforward document, dealing with impacts on the transport network accompanying planning applications without providing detailed capacity assessments. A TS is required by the new validation checklists (June 2008) for all development that fall beneath the threshold for a TA but still have some form of material impact on the highway.</p>
<p>Windfall Site</p>	<p>A site not specifically allocated for development in a development plan, but which becomes available for development during the lifetime of a plan.</p>

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

On behalf of Essex County Council (ECC), Place Services has been commissioned to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the ECC Minerals Local Plan Review 2020.

1.2 The Minerals Local Plan (MLP) Review / Amended MLP

A Minerals Local Plan Review (referred to hereafter as ‘the Plan review’) is being undertaken by ECC. This responds to a statutory need to review adopted Local Plans at least every five years.

The Essex Minerals Local Plan (MLP) was adopted in July 2014 and provides planning policies for minerals development in Essex until 2029. It sets a policy framework within which the best possible use of resources can be made and allocates sites for future mineral extraction and associated development. The MLP contains policies promoting recycling and secondary processing, the safeguarding of resources and facilities, and high-quality site restoration, all in the pursuit of sustainable development.

The review of the Minerals Local Plan focuses on an assessment to determine whether the policies of the adopted 2014 Local Plan need updating, and subsequently concluding either that the policies do not need updating, or that one or more policies do need updating, (and publishing the reasons for this).

1.3 The Requirement for Sustainability Appraisal

The requirement for Sustainability Appraisal (SA) comes from a commitment to sustainable development. SA examines the effects of proposed plans in a wide context, taking into account economic, social and environmental considerations in order to promote sustainable development. It is mandatory for Local Plans to undergo a Sustainability Appraisal in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Planning Act 2008, and in accordance with paragraph 165 of the NPPF.

1.4 The Aim and Structure of the SA

The key aims of the SA is to:

- Evaluate the likely sustainability effects of the MLP’s content and alternative approaches
- Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
- Propose measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the MLP

These tasks are outlined in more detail within the below sub-headings.

1.4.1 Predicting and evaluating the effects of the MLP, including alternatives

It is integral that all elements of the Plan that may give rise to any environmental, social or economic effects are assessed within the SA, as well as any alternative approaches that can be considered 'reasonable'. Commonly, this includes elements of the Plan such as policies and site allocation options.

An evaluation of the effects of the Plan and alternatives is required of the SA process. This will be presented in the form of a narrative that explains the various pros and cons of the Plan and alternative approaches and whether mitigation can be implemented or sought to eradicate or minimise any negative effects.

1.4.2 Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects

The SA also considers whether mitigation can be applied to ensure that any of the Plan's content can be made acceptable in planning terms. This will be presented in the form of recommendations. This stage will also include recommendations for maximising positive effects, where possible.

1.4.3 Proposing measures to monitor the environmental effects of Plan implementation

The SA also includes a list of possible indicators that can be collected to monitor those effects highlighted within the SA. These will include suggested data sources relevant for all of the SA Objectives and the 'key questions / criteria' it asks.

1.5 The SA of the Minerals Local Plan 2014

The Minerals Local Plan (MLP) was adopted in 2014 following an Examination in Public (EiP). The adopted MLP was accompanied by a SA, as required, which was also subject to examination. The adopted MLP contained much of the same content as contained within the amended MLP, to which this SA relates. It covered the statutory requirements of a minerals plan, notably:

- Planning policies for minerals development in Essex until 2029;
- The identification of future sites for mineral development (site allocations); and
- Ways to reduce reliance on primary mineral extraction in Essex, including through the use of recycled aggregates.

The SA of the adopted MLP assessed all relevant policies and site allocations of the Plan, including 'reasonable' alternatives to these. As the adopted MLP is still valid and we are still within that plan period, the SA work undertaken to assess the adopted MLP is similarly relevant, and forms the basis for the identification of effects in the SA of this Report. Much of the content of the adopted MLP is not proposed for amendment, and as such, those elements of the SA of the adopted MLP can be taken as the baseline position from which new effects are identified within this SA report.

2. Environmental Characteristics of the Plan Area

2.1 Baseline summary & Contextual Review

Annex A to the main SA Environmental Report outline the protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.

Annex B outlines the full baseline information profile for the Plan area, and where relevant further afield. The baseline information identifies current sustainability issues and problems in the Plan Review area to be addressed and provides a basis for predicting and monitoring the effects of implementing the Plan.

The process of collecting the information and data that is contained within these two Annexes allows the identification of key sustainability issues relevant to the Plan area, and allow the formulation of ‘Sustainability Objectives’ which are used to assess the Plan. These issues are outlined in Section 2.2 below, and the ‘Sustainability Objectives’ are included within Section 2.3.

2.2 Sustainability Issues Relevant to the Plan Area

The outcome of the above processes is the identification of key sustainability and environmental issues. These represent those sustainability and environmental problems facing the Plan Review area which assist in the finalisation of a set of relevant SA Objectives that can be subsequently expanded upon in a SA Framework.

The following table outlines the key issues which have led to the formulation of the SA Objectives for the Plan Review.

Table 1: Key Sustainability Issues

General Theme	Focused Theme	Description / Supporting Evidence
Biodiversity	Ecological designations and the effects of minerals activities	Essex contains a range of sites with ecological designations, including Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National and Local Nature Reserves. In addition, a number of Biodiversity Action Plans and Habitat Action Plans are in place, with the aim of conserving and increasing nationally and locally important habitats and species in the county.

General Theme	Focused Theme	Description / Supporting Evidence
Water quality	Risk of contamination	<p>The quality of water within the County’s rivers is generally fair to good in terms of chemical and biological quality. However, the chemical quality of the rivers is worse than the average quality of rivers in the East of England. There are potential issues with removal of part of an aquifer and disrupting groundwater flows.</p> <p>Risk of contamination of surface and groundwater and siltation of watercourses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pollution from the working of previously contaminated land, including the reworking of mineral waste tips for secondary aggregates and post-restoration uses, e.g. use of fertilisers, surface water run-off. • by suspended sediment from mineral working and tipping of mineral waste. • pollution from natural contaminants and fuels, oils and solvents.
Soils	Soil quality and land stability	<p>Mineral operations need to have regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degradation of soil stored during period of mineral working • Risk of land contamination • Fragmentation of agricultural holdings • Land take and permanent loss of soils • Land instability during mining operations and reclamation • Risk of subsidence or instability from sub-surface working, tipped land or hydrological changes
Landscape	Restoration for landscape benefits	<p>Many mineral deposits in Essex lie close or in sensitive landscapes. The Essex landscape and its relationship with historic settlements form an important component of the historic environment contributing to place making and local distinctiveness. Landscape plays an important role in proving the setting for all heritage assets,</p>

General Theme	Focused Theme	Description / Supporting Evidence
		<p>and as such, landscape is an important part of the setting of heritage assets.</p> <p>The use of quarries as landfill sites can extend the time for restoration and therefore increases landscape impacts. Landscape restoration and management opportunities should be maximised in relation to minerals/landfill operations and after-use.</p>
Historic environment	Minimising / avoiding effects on assets	<p>The county includes large numbers of recorded archaeological sites, listed buildings and conservation areas, as well as scheduled monuments. Many of these assets lie in close proximity to mineral deposits. The NPPF requires a positive strategy for the conservation of the historic environment.</p> <p>Landscape scale heritage assets such as Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, or non-designated heritage assets, can be particularly sensitive to changes in their setting, for example through visual intrusion, the introduction of movement and noise, and changes in hydrology / groundwater flows.</p>
Flooding	Drainage and disturbance	<p>Throughout the county there is a greater need for flood and surface water management which has implications regarding the location, longevity and viability of minerals operations.</p> <p>Proposed minerals developments must ensure they do not impede drainage in any way, and that mineral processing plant is not at risk of flood damage. Similarly, any proposed minerals and waste developments should not impact any flood infrastructure. In general, the following risks relate to mineral development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance or removal of surface features such as watercourses or flood storage. • Increased risk of groundwater flooding from low level restoration. • Effects of long-term pumping on other abstractors and wetland habitats.

General Theme	Focused Theme	Description / Supporting Evidence
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential impacts of dewatering on the historic environment, for example on archaeology as well as ornamental water features such as lakes and fountains within Registered Parks and Gardens
Transport	Congestion and road safety	<p>Parts of the strategic road network pass through towns and villages creating issues for local communities in terms of air quality, amenity and road safety which can be heavily impacted by increases in HGV trips - particularly in sensitive rural areas and designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).</p> <p>Minerals and waste development may lead to changes in local travel patterns that may intensify existing issues such as congestion or road safety.</p>
Minerals development	Safeguarding resource	<p>There is a strong need to safeguard mineral resources, including through increased use of secondary and recycled materials.</p> <p>There is a strong need to ensure that mineral resources are both adequately supplied and also viable from an economic viewpoint. This is also the case for wider minerals and waste industries.</p>
Minerals development	Meeting demand / growth needs	<p>At the LPA level, growth requirements are at an unprecedented level, and house building is needed to meet a housing shortage. Similarly, a number of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects have been identified within Essex. Without a plan-led system a steady and adequate supply of building materials might not be forthcoming to facilitate forecasted development needs.</p>
Health	Human health and pollution	<p>Potential impacts on health, well-being and quality of life should be taken into account in identifying suitable sites for minerals sites and waste facilities. The potential impact of noise, dust, vibration, lighting and water pollution generated by ongoing operations needs to be considered.</p>

2.3 The Sustainability Objectives formulated for the SA

The following table explores whether the identified SA Objectives above fall into the three broad categories of sustainability, namely social, environmental and economic themes.

Table 2: The SA Objectives

SA Objective	Environmental	Social	Economic
1) To protect and enhance biodiversity through Essex and beyond	✓		
2) To maintain and enhance water quality and resources	✓	✓	
3) To minimise the risk of flooding	✓	✓	
4) To encourage the sustainable use of land and protection of soils, including the best and most versatile agricultural land.			✓
5) To promote the minerals supply hierarchy and where mineral waste is produced, to promote the movement of minerals waste up the waste management hierarchy.	✓	✓	✓
6) To safeguard and where possible improve air quality.	✓	✓	
7) To minimise net emissions of greenhouse gases and increase adaptability to climate change.	✓	✓	✓
8) To avoid, and if this is not possible minimise impacts, both direct, and indirect (e.g. through changes in setting), on the significance of the historic environment, both above and below ground.	✓	✓	

SA Objective	Environmental	Social	Economic
9) To protect and enhance the quality and character of landscapes, including the Metropolitan Green Belt	✓	✓	
10) To maximise opportunities for economic development, including jobs, arising from minerals activities.		✓	✓
11) To promote improvements in the sustainable use of minerals.	✓	✓	✓
12) To achieve restoration and the aftercare of all mineral sites that offer the best sustainability benefits.	✓	✓	✓
13) To reduce the transportation of minerals, road congestion, and promote the movement of minerals using sustainable transport.	✓	✓	✓
14) To protect and where possible enhance human health and well-being.		✓	
15) To minimise any nuisance and impact on local amenity resulting from minerals activities		✓	

3. Summary of the SA Findings

3.1 Introduction to this Summary

This section sets out a summary of the appraisal of the Minerals Local Plan, as amended.

The main SA Environmental Report assesses the Plan's (and where relevant reasonable alternative approaches to):

- Spatial Vision;
- Aims and Strategic Objectives;
- Strategic Policies;
- The Minerals Provision Figure;
- Preferred Minerals Sites for Primary Mineral Extraction; and
- Development Management Policies.

Assessment of the Plan's content has been undertaken against the sustainability objectives. This summary outlines 'whole Plan' effects, incorporating the findings of the assessment of each of the six bullet points above when considered together.

3.2 'Whole Plan' Effects by Sustainability Theme

The conclusions of the SA are outlined within sub-headings that correspond to a thematic Sustainability Objective.

It should be noted that as the amended MLP does not allocate any new sites for mineral extraction, the majority of the amendments proposed will apply only to future applications for mineral development, including those allocations for which planning permission has not yet been granted. It is therefore appropriate to focus the conclusions of this SA on the Policy content that exists and is proposed for amendment. There is no reiteration of the appraisal of site allocations as this was undertaken for the adopted MLP and no changes are proposed.

3.2.1 Biodiversity

Uncertain / Positive Effects

The Plan's effects on biodiversity have been assessed as cautiously uncertain with a strong possibility of positive outcomes. This uncertainty is derived from the findings of the Habitats Regulation Assessment / Appropriate Assessment (HRA/AA) work accompanying the MLP. The HRA/AA looks at the effects of the MLP on 'Habitats Sites' and raises the potential for effects on Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) associated with air quality from lorry transportation to and from quarries 'in-combination' with other Plans and programmes. Further advice is being sought from Natural England regarding such effects.

Regarding isolated site specific effects, the HRA/AA work also identified the potential for likely significant effects on the integrity of Habitats Sites related to disturbance (allocation A31 – Maldon Road Birch, and the safeguarded transshipment site at Parkeston Quay East, Harwich) and water quality (A31 – Maldon Road Birch). The potential for these effects are considered neutralised through mitigation that is embedded into the Plan in regard to both disturbance and water quality. This mitigation is newly proposed of the MLP as amended following the recommendations of the AA. It is worthy of note that the two sites included as having the potential for negative effects have not yet been subject to a planning application for their allocated / safeguarded use, and as such there can be confidence that the MLP as amended will ensure that no such effects are forthcoming. It should be further noted that all other potential effects regarding Habitats Sites have been ruled out in the HRA/AA, as suitable mitigation has been included within MLP policy.

Separate to this, some positive effects on biodiversity could be realised in the long term and possibly after the plan period in many cases, associated with policy regarding the restoration and after-uses of former quarries.

However, although MLP amendments seek greater alignment to District-level Green and Blue Infrastructure studies in restoration schemes, which would likely ensure some biodiversity benefits, there is also a greater focus for restoration schemes to offer human health and well-being benefits through possible recreational land. This is not necessarily compatible with biodiverse habitats due to disturbance. This explains the level of uncertainty towards biodiversity at the whole Plan level.

3.2.2 Water quality and resources

No Effects

There exists a possibility that minerals extraction / activities could lead to adverse impacts on groundwater conditions. Nevertheless, this SA considers that Policy DM1 – Development Management Criteria will lead to neutral effects regarding water quality, due to the Policy’s stance of ensuring mitigation. The Policy will therefore ensure that any effects on water quality will have to be mitigated, otherwise planning permission would not be granted.

3.2.3 Flood risk

No Effects

As the Plan indicates, sand and gravel working is considered ‘water compatible development’ and mineral working and processing is ‘less vulnerable’ to flood risk. Additionally, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was undertaken for the adopted MLP to inform site selection. At the planning application stage, the Plan’s DM1 covers the requirements of proposals. An amendment proposed to the MLP includes that proposals for minerals development will be permitted subject to it being demonstrated that the development would not have an unacceptable impact, including cumulative impact with other developments, upon flood risk. Further, supporting text outlines that applications need to

demonstrate that any dewatering processes will not affect flood risk, and evidence should be included within a surface water drainage strategy that accompanies any application.

Within this SA, positive effects are highlighted through an approach to assessment that acknowledges that minerals activities can only mitigate impacts, which in the case of flood risk includes those at the individual proposal level and cumulatively with other development. It is considered that the best possible effect is again to seek a neutral outcome from the baseline position. With that considered, the whole plan effects of the Plan's policy criteria are considered to be 'no effect.'

3.2.4 Soils / agricultural land preservation

Uncertain Effects

Policy S12 outlines the Plan's amendments concerning restoration to agricultural land. The Policy's previous approach, as adopted and prior to the amendments being proposed, had a focus on agricultural after-uses alongside habitat creation. Such schemes may still come forward, where not already proposed and forming part of permissions, however it should be noted that agriculture and biodiversity enhancement / habitat creation need not be incompatible land uses.

The Policy and supporting text acknowledges that a balance should be achieved between current and future agricultural need and site-specific biodiversity value. The Policy is amended to state that 'land of the best and most agricultural value should be capable of being restored back to the best and most versatile agricultural land, though the proposed after-use need not always be for agriculture'. This is compliant with national requirements of such policy and ensures minor positive effects regarding the sustainable use of land. Effects are not significant for agricultural land preservation however in line with a possible reduction in the number of sites that may otherwise have been restored to agriculture in the Plan area without the Policy amendment. This leads to overall uncertain effects on soils and agricultural land preservation, where it is not possible to determine the specific after-uses of forthcoming planning applications at this stage.

3.2.5 Minerals supply

Significant Positive Effects

The Plan seeks to ensure a 'steady and adequate' supply of minerals throughout the Plan period, through a plan-led approach of retaining existing allocations.

The MLP's approach ensures that any sudden uplift in sales can be met in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that 'plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change'. With regard to the MLP, the 'development needs' that the plan is to service relates to the provision of sufficient aggregate to support growth and development

This SA also makes the assessment that the Plan's amended position on prior extraction in Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) / Minerals Consultation Areas (MCAs) for non-mineral developments (now amended as 'required' as opposed to 'considered' under the adopted MLP), will likely increase the potential for minerals to be extracted as windfalls, i.e. resource that is in addition to that planned at site allocations and existing operating sites. There will therefore be significant positive effects in regard to mineral supply, at least until the next Plan review period.

3.2.6 Air quality

Uncertain Effects

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) at the Plan level has been undertaken for the MLP as amended. This 'strategic' HIA concludes that the extent of health impacts arising from mineral activities are more suitably identified at the application stage. The Plan includes that where relevant a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) will be required to accompany any planning application. HIAs will need to address issues of nuisance and amenity, where they correlate to health impacts, such as routeing, dust, air quality, noise, and safety. The Plan is therefore assessed as ensuring the impacts of minerals development as they may impact on health are a strong and understood consideration of individual applications. Policy DM1 of the Plan further ensures that health related impacts are understood at the application stage, with the added consideration of cumulative effects with other developments.

Associated with highways and transportation, an amendment to Policy S11 has been proposed to offer a stronger stance on air quality, stating that 'where the movement of minerals are by road, HGV movements shall not generate unacceptable impacts on highways safety, highways capacity and air quality (particularly in relation to any potential breaches of National Air Quality Objectives and impacts on any Air Quality Management Areas).' How this is sought to be achieved is reflected through the Plan's new criteria pertaining to Transport Statements or Transport Assessments. These ensure that for applications for proposals reliant on road transportation, that the road network is appropriate to accommodate that use and that vehicle traffic use appropriate routes, amongst other considerations. The stance of the Policy seeks to ensure 'no effect', acknowledging also the correlation between traffic movement and air quality.

Nevertheless, it is assumed that there would be an increase in transport movements (and therefore emissions) from any and all development. It is difficult at this stage to substantiate any direct transport related air quality effects occurring from the Plan or subsequent minerals activities, especially in consideration of the fact that many minerals activities are temporary. Available evidence regarding air quality, such as diffusion tube monitoring at key locations, does not and cannot isolate emissions by vehicle type or destination. As such, 'uncertain' effects are cautiously highlighted for air quality in the short-medium term, reflecting the lifetime of permissions. The effect of a proposal regarding air quality is likely to be better understood at the site level and at the planning application stage, through the requirements of the Policy and subsequent Transport Assessments / Transport Statements. This would include consideration of proposed mitigation.

3.2.7 Climate change

No Effects / Positive Effects

The Plan seeks to ensure that ‘all minerals development is located, operated and managed whilst having regard to climate change mitigation and adaptation, so the County plays its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and is resilient to potentially more extreme future weather conditions’ as included in the Plan’s Vision. Further, the Plan’s Strategic Objectives seeks to ensure ‘the integration of features which promote climate change mitigation and adaptation into the design of minerals restoration and after-care proposals.’

In terms of Plan Policy, Policy S3 set the framework for climate change. Amendments to this Policy touch on how development proposals can meet Plan objectives, which extend to minimising and/or offsetting emissions and resilience for the lifetime of the development (including restoration and after-care). As minerals operations are temporary, the effects of wider positive outcomes are therefore limited. Minimisation and offsetting any negative effects of proposals would therefore lead to positive outcomes in the short-medium term, reflective of the lifetime of operations.

Nevertheless, the potential for minor long-term positive effects exists in the form of Plan amendments to ensure a joined-up approach to restoration and after-uses associated with Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategies at the LPA level. Further, Policy S3 sets out that ‘The Mineral Planning Authority will support minerals development which increases the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.’ This considered, positive long-term effects have been highlighted in this assessment.

3.2.8 The historic environment

No Effects

It can be considered that the majority of the effects on the historic environment were considered at the stage of the adopted MLP in 2014, through the Plan’s site selection methodology. The majority of the Plan’s allocations are either operational or have planning permission, with the remainder yet to submit or have applications determined subject to the Plan’s policy framework. The Plan effects as concluded here, focus on the Plan’s suite of policies and coverage of the historic environment.

Policy S10 of the Plan (Protecting and enhancing the environment and local amenity) states that, ‘applications for minerals development shall demonstrate that appropriate consideration has been given to public health, wellbeing and safety, amenity, quality of life of nearby communities, and the natural, built, and historic environment. Appropriate mitigation measures shall be included in the proposed scheme of development to ensure that no unacceptable adverse impacts would arise.’ This position ensures that mitigation is forthcoming in the first instance, with an additional requirement for enhancements to be sought.

The two relevant policies to the historic environment (Policy DM1 and Policy S10), notwithstanding those links between landscape and the historic environment, offer neutral outcomes in response to a need to understand the scope of any harm at the planning application stage with the outcome of mitigating effects. There is considered little scope for long-term enhancements from the Policy framework, in so far as this is not covered with any preferred direction, it is unlikely that mineral operations would be permitted in the first instance should any harm be significant.

3.2.9 Landscape

Positive / Uncertain Effects

The principle of extracting minerals inevitably leads to concerns surrounding landscapes, in the short-medium term at least. In the long term however, restoration schemes can ensure that landscapes are at best restored, or returned to a similar land use to those pre-extraction.

Of consideration is the correlation between aggregate recycling as a mineral operation and its relationship to, and as part of, the waste hierarchy ensures the sustainable use of land and resources. This approach is intended to minimise the number of extraction sites needed, which would lead to less landscape disturbance. Similarly the Plan’s approach to ‘requiring’ prior extraction on non-mineral development sites within the MSA / MCA, rather than merely ‘considering’ it (as included within the adopted MLP) increases the likelihood of resource being extracted as or through windfalls. This again seeks to minimise the need for extraction sites which would limit the negative effects on landscapes.

Amendments to the Plan are proposed regarding restoration and after-uses. The amendments to Policy S12 ensure that restoration is now outcome led. It is proposed that the final restoration level of sites will now generally be decided on a case-by-case basis, but must be sympathetic to the surrounding landscape with infilling only at a scale considered necessary to achieve beneficial restoration. Restoration to higher levels, if forthcoming, could also see landscapes restored closer to original pre-extraction levels, offering positive effects in the context of the Policy assessment, yet uncertainty at the whole Plan level in the absence of any commitment to such schemes in specific areas.

Further uncertainty is assessed in conclusion, where the Policy’s supporting text allows the possibility for restoration to facilitate built development, such as housing or employment uses, if consistent with District / Borough Local Plan objectives. Although it is not anticipated that this would necessarily be frequently forthcoming, this would see some irreparable loss to landscapes. This considered and on balance, positive to uncertain effects are assessed of the Plan as whole.

3.2.10 Economic development, including jobs arising from minerals activities

Positive Effects

In concluding the economic effects of the Plan, the possible effects on the mineral industry are considered, alongside the economic benefits that can be assumed from the Plan's apportionment figure.

It is considered that the effects on increasing jobs in the mineral industry will be marginal to neutral, in line with less transportation of mineral in response to the Plan's locational preference for minerals infrastructure and the objective of reducing mineral miles, and also the possibility of restoration proposals now being permitted for a wider range of after-uses. Where employment through transportation can be seen to be minimised, jobs within restoration proposals may increase.

The mineral provision figure can be seen to offer flexibility should any uplift associated with housing and employment growth be forthcoming, as is indicated through LPA housing requirements, which are significantly higher now than were being provided in 2014. Similarly, various and multiple infrastructure schemes are identified within the Plan, including National Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPS) which are likely to require additional aggregates in the Plan period that would not be captured or calculated in the past. To this extent, positive effects are highlighted at the Plan level regarding economic growth. Effects are not however predicted as 'significant' in consideration of a level of uncertainty surrounding the industry; as sales of sand and gravel are market-led and there is no evidence to support any determination that the availability of minerals stimulates growth in the first instance.

3.2.11 The sustainable use of minerals

Significant Positive Effects

The Plan, and this SA, consider the mineral provision figure to be necessary in ensuring a steady and adequate supply of minerals. The MLP seeks to ensure a supply of minerals that can respond to any uplifts in sales, through a plan-led system. By allocating sites, this ensures that primary extraction can occur on sites that have been selected through a robust selection process and can be considered the most sustainable available at the time.

Of further consideration within this assessment is, as previously discussed, the relationship between aggregate recycling as a mineral operation and the waste hierarchy. The Plan's approach to aggregate recycling facilities, as aligned to that of the Waste Local Plan (2017), ensures the sustainable use of land and resources. This intends to minimise the number of extraction sites needed in the future and ensure the sustainable use of minerals. Similarly the Plan's amended approach to 'requiring' prior extraction on non-mineral development sites within the MSA / MCA rather than merely 'considering' it (as included within the adopted MLP) increases the likelihood of resource being extracted as or through windfalls.

Evidence suggests that the adopted approach of 'consideration only' to prior extraction has led to the potential of prior extraction not being appropriately assessed. The amended Plan approach, should it result in a higher amount of mineral coming forward through windfalls, could lead to comparatively less environmental effects in the future than primary extraction sites. This considered, significant positive effects are highlighted in regard to the Plan's amended approach.

3.2.12 Restoration and aftercare of mineral sites

Significant Positive Effects

The Plan’s amendments are assessed at this stage as having significant positive effects in line with a more flexible approach that can ensure a wider range of after-uses. The changes ensure that restoration and after-uses can benefit not only environmental themes of sustainability, but also those related to social and economic themes.

Policy S12 regards restoration and after-use of mineral extraction sites. The focus can now be seen as less on restoration to low levels and more about after-use to ensure net gains in biodiversity, health and well-being improvements and also alignment to Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategies at the District-level. It is proposed that the final restoration level of sites will now generally be decided on a case-by-case basis, but must be sympathetic to the surrounding landscape with infilling only at a scale considered necessary to achieve beneficial restoration. This not only seeks gains in regard to environmental and social objectives, but is also aligned to the Waste Local Plan (WLP) (2017).

Amendments to the Plan also consider built development after-uses, such as housing or employment uses, if consistent with District / Borough Local Plan objectives, offering scope for economic benefits. This, alongside the previously mentioned potential for environmental and social gains, allows for significant positive effects to be highlighted of the Plan.

3.2.13 The sustainable transportation of minerals

Positive Effects

Associated with highways and transportation, an amendment to Policy S11 outlines the need for Transport Statements or Transport Assessments. These ensure that for applications for proposals reliant on road transportation, that the road network is appropriate to accommodate that use and that vehicle traffic use appropriate routes, amongst other considerations. The stance of the Policy seeks to ensure ‘no effect’, acknowledging also the importance of traffic movement.

Nevertheless, the Plan acknowledges that due to the pattern of infrastructure in the county, there is a necessary reliance on the road network for mineral movements rather than by rail or sea. Similarly, the market ensures that it is not economic to transport minerals significant distances. This is considered a constant that is beyond the remit of the Plan to influence at this stage.

The Plan does respond positively however in ensuring that mineral miles (i.e. the distance minerals travel) are reduced, and that the location of any new mineral infrastructure is located in close proximity to the strategic road network. Similarly, the Strategy of the MLP is to ‘provide for the best possible geographic dispersal of sand and gravel across the County’, taking into consideration where the resource is located. The Plan’s amendment to remove a focus of infrastructure in the ‘key centres of Basildon, Chelmsford, Colchester and Harlow’ to

‘areas of development’ ensures flexibility in ensuring that aggregate recycling facilities, amongst other minerals infrastructure, is located where development may occur in the Plan area. This ensures the sustainable movement of minerals and responds to high growth targets at the District / Borough level, which could see future growth locations not following traditional patterns where growth has previously taken place.

The Plan is therefore assessed as having minor positive effects on the sustainable transportation of minerals, in so far as the Plan can influence the location of proposals in coordination with growth. Effects are limited and not significant due to the existing transport infrastructure of the County and nature of the industry, which is market led. This is, as previously mentioned, is beyond the remit of the Plan.

3.2.14 Human health and well-being

No Effects / Positive Effects

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) at the Plan level has been undertaken for the MLP as amended. This ‘strategic’ HIA concludes that the extent of health impacts arising from mineral activities are more suitably identified at the application stage. The Plan includes that where relevant a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) will be required to accompany any planning application. HIAs will need to address issues of nuisance and amenity, where they correlate to health impacts, such as routeing, dust, air quality, noise, and safety. The Plan is therefore assessed as having no effect on human health in the short-medium term.

Policy S10 sets the strategic approach of the Plan in ensuring that environmental and social effects of a proposal are understood at the planning application stage. In terms of outcomes and sustainability benefits, positive long-term effects are highlighted regarding human health, where the Policy, as amended, requires applications to demonstrate that opportunities have been taken to improve and enhance the environment and amenity, and to deliver a net gain in biodiversity, as an outcome of final restoration. Positive long-term effects are also highlighted regarding restoration that offers the best sustainability benefits, be it habitat creation, open space and / or for recreational opportunities. This is further elaborated on in the amended Policy S12.

In terms of outcomes and sustainability benefits, positive long-term effects are highlighted regarding human health, where the Policy, as amended, requires applications to demonstrate that opportunities have been taken to improve and enhance the environment and amenity.

3.2.15 Nuisance and impact on local amenity

No Effects

A strategic priority for minerals development, as outlined in Policy S2 of the Plan, is ensuring there are no significant adverse impacts arising from proposed minerals development for public health and wellbeing, public safety, amenity, the quality of life of nearby communities,

and the environment. Minerals development can cause concern to residents and local communities because of noise, dust, fumes, vibration, illumination and debris on the highway from vehicle movements. The Plan acknowledges that when considering planning applications, the MPA must be satisfied that those potential adverse impacts have all been satisfactorily investigated and addressed. This is elaborated on in Policy S10 which sets the strategic approach of the Plan in ensuring that environmental and social effects of a proposal are understood at the planning application stage. The Plan also ensures that where relevant a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) will be required to accompany any planning application. HIAs will need to address issues of nuisance and amenity, where they correlate to health impacts, such as routeing, dust, noise and safety.

It should be further acknowledged that the Plan's development management policies, in particular Policy DM1, offer more detail to developers / landowners on what evidence based assessments should be submitted alongside a planning application. Positive implications have been highlighted for Policy DM1 in ensuring neutral effects, where social Sustainability Objectives can be positively met through protection or mitigation. This is true of nuisance and impact on local amenity (DM1 criterion 1) both at the development level and cumulatively on issues such as noise, dust, light pollution, and vibration. The coverage of this theme, and an explanation of its relevance to minerals planning and operations, is further elaborated on within the Policy's supporting text / reasoned justification.

In conclusion, it is assessed that there will be no effects regarding the social objectives of the SA in line with a desire to minimise impacts in the first instance and ensure mitigation where effects can not be entirely ruled out.

3.3 Recommendations / Mitigation Measures

The MLP as amended is not considered to give rise to any additional effects that were not assessed in the adopted MLP of 2014, and as such no recommendations have been made to the amendments proposed within the MLP proposed for amendment at this stage.

It should be noted that the MLP as amended benefits from a starting point of an adopted Plan, which was subject to SA and examined in 2014. For the adopted MLP, in 2014, the SA made numerous recommendations as part of the iterative process, which were outlined in the SA at that stage and reiterated fully in an Adoption Statement that same year.

4. Next Steps

4.1 Consultation

The Regulation 18 MLP and this SA Environmental Report will be subject to consultation. There are three statutory consultees that are required to be consulted for all Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment documents. These are:

- The Environment Agency;
- Natural England; and
- Historic England.

In addition to these, consultation will seek to engage the wider community in order to encompass comprehensive public engagement. Essex County Council, as the Minerals Planning Authority, are additionally required to invite comments from focussed groups, relevant stakeholders and interested parties.

4.2 The Regulation 19 MLP

Once the Regulation 18 MLP and SA Environmental Report have been consulted upon, work will begin on formalising a Regulation 19 Plan for further consultation taking into account those comments received during the Regulation 18 consultation. The Regulation 19 Plan will be accompanied by a new iteration of the SA Environmental Report.

4.3 Future Monitoring

The significant sustainability effects of implementing a Local Plan must be monitored in order to identify unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action. The Sustainability Framework contained in Appendix 1 of this Report includes suggested indicators in order to monitor each of the Sustainability Objectives, however these may not all be collected due to limited resources and difficulty in data availability or collection.

Guidance stipulates that it is not necessary to monitor everything included within the Sustainability Framework, but that monitoring should focus on significant sustainability effects, e.g. those that indicate a likely breach of international, national or local legislation, that may give rise to irreversible damage or where there is uncertainty and monitoring would enable preventative or mitigation measures to be taken.

Upon adoption Local Plans will be accompanied by an Adoption Statement which will outline those monitoring indicators most appropriate for future monitoring of the Plan in line with Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

Appendix 1: The Selection and Rejection of the Options Identified

The Reasonable Alternatives Identified for Assessment

The SA of the amended MLP, identifies various alternative approaches to the Plan’s amendments that are considered reasonable and realistic for exploration and assessment. Alternative examples were identified and assessed regarding the following Policies, or Plan approaches:

- Policy S5 Creating a Network of Aggregate Recycling Facilities
- Policy S8 Safeguarding Mineral Resources
- The Minerals Provision Figure
- Policy P1 Preferred Sites for Primary Sand and Gravel Extraction

The following table of this Appendix set out the reason for selecting the Plan’s proposed approach, in each instance, alongside the reason for rejecting each of the alternatives identified. Please note that these ‘reasons’ are valid at the time of writing (the Regulation 18 stage) and it is possible that these might change in response to any consultation comments or new evidence base that may be commissioned.

Table 3: Reasons for selecting the Plan’s approach

Policy	Reasonable Alternatives	Reason for the selection and rejection of options
Policy S5 Creating a Network of Aggregate Recycling Facilities	Alternative S5(1): To retain the adopted Policy wording: ‘Proposals for new aggregate recycling facilities, whether non-strategic or in the form of SARS, should be located on the main road network in proximity to the Key Centres of Basildon, Chelmsford, Colchester, and Harlow.’	The ‘Essex Minerals Local Plan Review 2021 – Report setting out the Rationale behind the Proposed Amendments’ document (referred to as the ‘Rationale document’ throughout this section) explains the selection of the proposed amendment in favour of the adopted MLP Policy wording, stating that, ‘Part 3 (of the Policy) is proposed to be amended to remove references to any specific Key Centre where development may take place. As previously stated in this review, with the move towards joint working at the district level, future growth locations in the County may not match the traditional areas where growth has previously taken place. As joint plans are at various stages of production, it is considered appropriate to state that the MLP will support

Policy	Reasonable Alternatives	Reason for the selection and rejection of options
		<p>aggregate facilities at areas of growth and development rather than attempt to specify where these might be... Through Duty to Cooperate engagement, it was recommended that Clause f of the policy be removed. It was held that major development sites that come forward may not always be within an adopted Local Plan.'</p>
<p>Policy S8 Safeguarding Mineral Resources</p>	<p>Alternative S8(1): To only 'consider' prior extraction, rather than specifically 'require' it if relevant NPPF tests are met.</p> <p>Alternative S8(2): To remove the threshold of 5ha for sand and gravel.</p> <p>Alternative S8(3): To lower the threshold for sand and gravel below 5ha (assessed notionally).</p> <p>Alternative S8(4): To raise the threshold for sand and gravel above 5ha (assessed notionally).</p>	<p>Regarding a requirement for prior extraction, rather than it's mere consideration (Alternative S8(1)), the Rationale document states, 'it is noted that for the policy to have material weight, one must do more than just 'consider' prior extraction before a non-mineral development takes place on mineral bearing land. On that basis, it is concluded that Policy S8 be revised to remove the need to have 'consideration' of the need for prior extraction, and instead that this needs to be 'assessed''. It is also worthy of note that a significant resource has been lost through not requiring prior extraction since 2014, and the possibilities of windfalls coming forward through the remainder of the Plan period could significantly contribute to the landbank.</p> <p>Regarding the use of a 5ha threshold, and alternative approaches S8(2), S8(3) and S8(4), the Rationale document states that, 'it is considered appropriate to retain a 5ha threshold for applications in sand and gravel MSAs as the trigger point for the engagement of Policy S8... Informal consultation carried out with the minerals industry as part of initial evidence gathering for the production of the MLP in2007 found that there would need to be a minimum of 3ha of resource for the site to be capable of being worked, and so approximately doubling that minimum threshold is considered a reasonable approach towards ensuring that the requirements of Policy S8 only apply to non-</p>

Policy	Reasonable Alternatives	Reason for the selection and rejection of options
		<p>mineral led applications where there is a reasonable prospect of their being a sufficient quantity of mineral present which is practicable to... Within the Inspectors Report into the Examination of the MLP, the Inspector passes judgement on this threshold in Paragraph 151. It was noted that ‘Although arbitrary, the 5ha threshold was subject to public consultation and this approach is justified, given the wide extent of sand and gravel reserves in Essex, where prior extraction need not always be necessary.’ The MPA continue to support the threshold of 5ha as being an appropriate trigger point for the application of mineral resource safeguarding policy.</p>
<p>The Minerals Provision Figure</p>	<p>Alternative MPF(1): To plan for the rolling ten-years sales average of 3.13mtpa, with no other considerations taken into account.</p>	<p>The Rational document states that, ‘PPG qualifies that “The basis for the provision of the supply of aggregates is through the Local Aggregate Assessment. Mineral planning authorities may decide, collectively, to plan for more or less than set out in the Guidelines based on their Local Aggregate Assessment.”... the Government’s continued support for the current Guidelines implied by their continued inclusion in the NPPF, even though they will soon expire, and the intention to review the approach to guidelines and provision forecasts in the future, it would seem inappropriate to revise the current apportionment set out in the MLP when the forecasting methodology set out in the NPPF has already been acknowledged as being under consideration for revision. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that a recalculation of mineral supply on the basis of ten-year rolling sales, as currently advocated by the NPPF would not support recent annual sales, which is considered to amount to ‘other relevant local information’ which allows for a deviation from this methodology as set out in NPPF Paragraph</p>

Policy	Reasonable Alternatives	Reason for the selection and rejection of options
		207 Clause a.'
<p>Policy P1 Preferred Sites for Primary Sand and Gravel Extraction</p>	<p>Alternative P1(1): To not allocate the 'reserve' sites as 'preferred' at this stage and undertake a call-for-sites exercise as part of the Plan Review, inviting new site submissions.</p> <p>Alternative P1(2): To increase the proportion of marine-won sand and gravel that would contribute to the overall County requirement for sand and gravel, and reduce the need for land-won aggregates through the re-designation of the 'reserve' sites as 'preferred.'</p>	<p>Regarding Alternative P1(1), it should be noted that the 'reserve' sites at Bradwell Quarry represent extensions to existing permissions and there is confirmation that these will come forward within the Plan period. They also benefit from being identified through the adopted MLP site selection process and are therefore plan-led allocations. The Rationale document states that, 'when Reserve Sites are added to the assumed total of Permitted Reserves, and assuming all sites come forward as envisaged, statutory compliance (with ensuring a seven year landbank) would cease to be achievable in 2025. This equates to the end of the second review period and as such, it is not considered necessary to embark on a Call for Sites exercise as part of this plan review.'</p> <p>A 'report to determine whether marine aggregate supply can offset the demand for land-won aggregates in Essex' has been undertaken for the MLP review. The feasibility of adopting Alternative P1(2) is discussed in this report. The Rationale document states that this work, 'found that there is no single source of publicly available data providing both the annual amount of marine won material landed at wharf facilities and the total available capacity at wharves to allow for a comparison to be made...It is also the case that the MPA is not able to directly facilitate an increase in wharf capacity or marine aggregate provision...On this basis, it is currently considered that there are no means through which to justify a reduction in the allocation of land-won aggregate through a reliance on an increase in marine-won aggregate landings.'</p>

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