



**STRATFORD-ON-AVON
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Local Industrial and Economic Development
Strategy**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening
Report**

**Stratford-on-Avon District Council
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)^{1 2} is a systematic process used during the preparation of plans and policies and it aims to provide a high level of protection for the environment; it contributes to the integration of environmental considerations in plan preparation with a view to promoting sustainable development. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process that similarly investigates plans and policies, including consideration of socio-economic factors in the same way as environmental factors and to the same level of detail. SA incorporating SEA is a mandatory requirement for Local Plans in accordance with planning legislation³ and paragraph 32 footnote 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018).
- 1.2 SA/SEA is an iterative and ongoing process that informs the preparation of draft plans and programmes. Likely significant effects are identified and assessed for the emerging elements of the draft plan and judged against reasonable alternatives. Mitigation measures are suggested for any significant negative effects identified. SA/SEA aims to provide a high level of protection for the environment and to promote sustainable development. The role of SA/SEA is to inform the Council in its decision making; the SA/SEA findings do not form the sole basis for decision-making – this is informed also by other studies, feasibility and feedback comments from consultation.
- 1.3 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004 dictates that Environmental Assessments should be carried out on Plans and Programmes in which category the Local Industrial and Economic Development Strategy falls.⁴
- 1.4 Whilst not a Local Plan or Supplementary Planning Document the Local Industrial and Economic Development Strategy comes under the definition of a plan or programme which may have land use implications and therefore SEA screening is being carried out regarding this Strategy.

2.0 Introduction to the Local Industrial and Economic Development Strategy 2018-2023

- 2.1 Stratford-on-Avon District Council has prepared a Local Industrial and Economic Strategy. The purpose of the Strategy is to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy and set out a plan for action to build on existing successes. It also sets out how Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) will work with partners and local businesses to

¹ EU Directive 2001/42/EC

² Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004

³ Section 19(5) of the 2004 Act and Regulation 22(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

deliver jobs and economic growth across the District through indigenous business growth, retention and new inward investment from the UK and abroad.

2.2 **Vision**

The vision for the strategy is simply stated to:

"Facilitate increased economic growth and prosperity in the District by 2023"

2.3 **Aims**

To further this vision three overarching aims are identified:

1. Business – the best place to start and grow a business
2. Place - prosperous communities and infrastructure upgrade
3. People – encourage innovation, good jobs and greater earning power

2.4 The Strategy is framed with reference to the emerging Coventry and Warwickshire Local Industrial Strategy and the UK Industrial Strategy.

2.5 Having examined the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy and the key challenges and opportunities, the following 9 priority areas emerged (arranged by aim):

Aim 1: Business

- *Automotive*
- *Agriculture and Rural Enterprise*
- *Business Growth and Start-ups*

Aim 2: Place

- *Retail and Town Centres*
- *Connectivity*
- *Infrastructure*

Aim 3: People

- *Culture, Tourism and Heritage*
- *Skills*
- *Incomes and Jobs*

2.6 **Action Plan**

The key output from the Strategy is a 5 year action plan. The action plan sets out pragmatic actions that SDC will undertake in order to deliver the objectives and achieve the aim of this Strategy 'to help facilitate increased economic growth in the District by 2023'.

2.7 The role of SDC is primarily as an enabler to help facilitate economic growth (i.e. indirect involvement). It is considered that SDC has four roles to play to deliver growth:

- Infrastructure and transformation
- Business engagement – Key Account Management
- Business support – in house and commissioned
- Strategic Review – actions.

Notwithstanding this, SDC is keen to explore ways in which it can itself invest in the District (i.e. direct involvement). As such, a fifth role has been identified:

- Commercialisation – partnerships, companies and joint ventures.

3.0 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS & GUIDANCE;

Need for SEA

3.1 Regulation 5 of the SEA Regulations requires an environmental assessment of plans which:

1. *are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use (Regulation 5, para. (2)(a), and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC (EIA Directive) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (Regulation 5, para. (2)(b)*

2. *in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (Regulation 5, para. (3))*

3. *set the framework for future development consent of projects⁵ (Regulation 5, para. (4)(b)*

4. *are determined to be likely to have significant environmental effects as determined under regulation 9(1) (Regulation 5, para. (4)(c))*

3.2 An environmental assessment need not be carried out for:

a) *plans which determine the use of a small area⁶ at local level (Regulation 5, para. (6)(a)); or*

b) *plans which are a minor modification⁷ to a plan or programme (Regulation 5, para. (6)(b)) unless it has been determined under regulation 9(1) that the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.*

3.3 The Local Industrial and Economic Strategy is not a development or Local plan and likewise does not set the framework for future development consent of projects. In addition the Strategy will not have a likely significant effect, either individually or in combination with other plans, on any European Site. Therefore, SEA is not a mandatory requirement for the Local Industrial and Economic Strategy.

⁵ European Commission guidance states that plans and programmes which *set the framework for future development consent of projects* would normally contain 'criteria or conditions which guide the way a consenting authority decides an application for development consent'. *Development consent* is defined in the EIA Directive as "the decision of the competent authority or authorities which entitled the developer to proceed with the project" (Article 1(2) of the EIA Directive).

⁶ European Commission guidance suggests that *plans which determine the use of small areas at local level* might include "a building plan which, for a particular, limited area, outlines details of how buildings must be constructed, determining, for example, their height, width or design"

⁷ '*Minor modifications*' should be considered in the context of the plan or programme which is being modified and of the likelihood of their having significant environmental effects. A modification may be of such small order that it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

3.4 The Regulations also require, *inter alia*, a determination to be made as to whether plans and programmes which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant effects on the environment. While, it is considered that the Strategy does not set a framework for future development consent of projects, such a determination is required to take account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 1 ('Criteria for determining whether a Plan or Programme is likely to have significant effects on the Environment') of the Regulations and submissions or observations from relevant environmental authorities.

SEA Screening Report

3.5 This document provides a screening determination of the need to carry out an SEA of the Local Industrial and Economic Development Strategy. Stratford on Avon District Council, as the "Responsible Authority" under the SEA Regulations, is responsible for undertaking this screening process that will determine if the Strategy is likely to have any significant environmental effects and therefore, whether an SEA is required.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

The following assessment (Table 4.1) has been prepared in accordance with the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004). Thus the Screening utilises specified criteria for determining the likely significant environmental impacts of the proposed variations as set out in Schedule 1 of SEA Regulations 2004.

Table 4.1

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLAN / PROGRAMME HAVING REGARD IN PARTICULAR TO:
<i>(i) The degree to which the plan/programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions, or by allocating resources</i>
It is the purpose of the Local Industrial and Economic Strategy to set out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development in Stratford-on-Avon District. In itself the strategy does not set a framework for projects or development. Such a framework continues to be delivered via the Stratford on Avon Core Strategy 2011-2031 adopted in July 2016. In this regard specific actions and objectives of the Strategy will have implications for the Core Strategy Review when and if it is undertaken. The Core Strategy itself is subject to separate Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (and Appropriate Assessment). Furthermore the emerging Site Allocations Plan identifies additional sites, for example, at Wellesbourne Campus and the Rother Quarter and amends the Core Strategy employment allocations. This DPD is due to be adopted 2019/2020 although scoping consultation was carried out in 2018.
<i>(ii) The degree to which the plan / programme influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy.</i>
While the Local Industrial and Economic Strategy is an action focused plan, it is not an operational plan nor a spatial land use plan. The priorities which will be implemented through operational plans have been identified based on an analysis of existing national, regional and local strategies, socio economic data and public consultations.

<i>(iii) The relevance of the plan/programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</i>
The Local Industrial and Economic Strategy is relevant and in some cases represents an opportunity to implement some of the Stratford- On- Avon District Core Strategy objectives in relation to sustainable development for instance in respect of economic development, affordable housing, transport and communications, retail development, tourism and leisure development, healthy communities , housing development, and sustainable energy. The strategy will be an important element for ensuring the delivery of these objectives.
<i>(iv) Environmental problems relevant to the plan / programme.</i>
It is not considered that environmental problems are specific to the Local Industrial and Economic Strategy.
<i>(v) The relevance of the plan / programme for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection).</i>
The local Industrial and Economic Strategy is not a spatial land use plan but specific actions may have implications for any review of the Core Strategy.
2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EFFECTS AND OF THE AREA LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED HAVING REGARD IN PARTICULAR TO:
<i>(i) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects:</i>
It is anticipated that the key objectives and principles to be adopted as part of the Local Industrial and Economic Strategy will ensure that the effects of the resulting changes to the existing operating environment will not be significant. The probability that these effects will be environmentally significant in negative terms is low.
<i>(ii) The cumulative nature of the effects:</i>
Cumulative negative environmental effects as a result of the Strategy are not expected. The likely effect of the strategy is to attain a balance between economic growth and the need to provide sustainable development, an example of this being support for broadband which due to facilitating greater homeworking could result in less journeys being made by private car.
<i>(iii) The trans-boundary nature of the effects:</i>
It is considered that there will be no trans-boundary effect on the environment arising from the Economic Development Strategy. The only trans boundary effects identified are those related to the economy.
<i>(iv) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents):</i>
No risks to human health or the environment have been identified.
<i>(v) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected):</i>
No particular environmental effects have been identified as a result of the Local Industrial and Economic Strategy.
<i>(vi) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</i>
<i>a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</i> No effects have been identified.
<i>b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, and;</i> No effects have been identified.
<i>c) Intensive land-use.</i> No effects have been identified.
<i>(vii) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status:</i>
No environmental effects have been identified as a result of the Local Industrial and Economic Strategy.

5.0 SEA SCREENING DETERMINATION

5.1 Following review and consideration of the issues pertaining to the Local Industrial and Economic Strategy, it is concluded that the strategy in itself will not result in a significant adverse environmental effect and will therefore not require a detailed assessment of effects through the SEA process.

This conclusion has been drawn through consideration of the following factors:

- The Strategy does not set a framework for consent of future projects;
- Key actions and objectives of the Local Industrial and Economic Strategy will be taken into account as necessary in any review of the Core Strategy and the emerging Site Allocations Plan (DPD), which will be subject to separate Strategic Environmental Assessments and Appropriate Assessments;

and

- The existing and adopted safeguarding policies on environmental protection within the existing adopted Stratford-on-Avon Core Strategy 2011-2031 Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) and Appropriate Assessment.