

Appendix 10a Assessment of Alternatives

The SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act require the Environmental Report to consider the impacts of alternatives to the proposed plan as part of the SEA. There is no alternative to producing the Local Development Plan as this is a statutory requirement under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006.

The Shetland MIR presented a number of options and alternatives for the direction of planning policy in Shetland. These options were formulated after meetings with infrastructure providers, other council services and Community Councils and provided a springboard for discussion on land use planning and the development of a spatial strategy for Shetland.

The LDP Main Issues Report stage sets out an approach to deal with the main planning issues and identifies a preferred option together with any reasonable alternatives. The SEA process has assessed both the preferred and alternative options and informed the alternative responses to these issues. While providing comment and suggesting changes on both preferred and alternative options in the plan the SEA assessment process did not identify any additional new alternative options and has not concluded that the preferred options be replaced with any of the alternatives.

The Main Issues Report was a consultative document that set out general policy issues and strategic options for the LDP. At that the time of production, proposed policies and proposals had not been formulated. Therefore no assessment of specific policies was undertaken at that stage of the SEA process. Once the Council reached a position on preferred MIR policy options it could then progress and develop LDP policies for full assessment as part of the Final Environmental Reporting stage. In undertaking an assessment of the policies, the SEA of the LDP kept in mind that policies could be altered, mitigated against or even not taken forward as a result of the assessment. This will be shown in this updated Environmental Report.

Alternatives and the Development of the Plan

The SEA Directive and the SEA Act require the Environmental Report to consider the impacts of alternatives to the proposed plan as part of the SEA. The Main Issues Report is itself a presentation of various alternatives for policies that could make up the Local Development Plan. The MIR was widely consulted upon before preferred options were finalised and integrated into the Local Development Plan. The consultation process fed into the creation of the LDP and provided an indication of which of the policy options had a more positive impact on the environment. Once the final identification of preferred options had taken place the next stage of the SEA process assessed in detail the environmental impact of these options to be taken forward into the LDP and its policies. Through suggesting detailed mitigations and amendments it ensured that the policy framework would avoid any potentially negative effects of the policies being taken forward.

Difference to the MIR that the assessment has made

As a result of the iterative assessment and consultation process within the SEA some of the key issues, supporting text and policy options have been revised. Modifications of policy clauses or new sections have been introduced as a result of the SEA process. The following summarises the overall impact of the SEA:

- a greater recognition and reference within the MIR to the importance of climate change and the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 with its new 'climate change duty' on public bodies;
- the addition of biodiversity as a key issue to be dealt with by the LDP process and reference to changes recommended to be made in existing policies within the old Structure Plan and Local Plan;
- a recognition of geodiversity as an important issue and the introduction of it alongside biodiversity as an integral part of the natural heritage to be covered by future policies;
- the refinement of the preferred options to better reflect potential environmental effects and to steer future development towards more sustainable solutions particularly in relation to cutting greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy or low carbon technologies and the use of more sustainable design and construction techniques.

Preferred Options and Alternatives Adopted for draft LDP

These have been assessed against SEA environmental objectives and environmental baseline issues. Annex E of the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report SEA Environmental Report (March 2010) outlines a comprehensive analysis of all the MIR Policy options. This report acted as the LDP's interim SEA Environmental Report. The Council has adopted a variety of policy options and taken them forward in devising a new land use planning policy framework for Shetland. This is shown in Table 1 below. Analysis on the future of the environment in the absence of the LDP is covered in Section 1.14 of the main report and Appendix 7. Full analysis of the MIR Policy Options pursued are contained individually in Appendices 10b to 10k.

Table 1 Summary Matrix of MIR Policy Options Pursued

	Title	Preferred option pursued?
Issue A	A Spatial Strategy for Shetland's housing in the short to medium term	No
Final Option Adopted for Local Development Plan (LDP)		
The LDP has opted for an allocations based policy detailed as preferred option 2 because this would provide certainty for developers and be in line with National Planning Policy and the SEA was inconclusive as it depends upon location of the sites.		
Issue B	Title	Preferred option pursued?
	A Spatial Strategy for Shetland	No

Final Option Adopted for Local Development Plan (LDP)

The LDP has developed alternative option 3 whilst incorporating some aspects of option 1 with the development of Areas of Best Fit. This would be in-line with the views determined by the MIR consultation and look to strengthen and enhance existing communities that according to the SEA is likely to have a uncertain as well as positive effects.

Issue C	Title	Preferred option pursued?
	The future use of key public sites in Lerwick	Yes

Final Option Adopted for Local Development Plan (LDP)

The LDP, following assessment of submitted sites, has included sites at Staney Hill and the Knab as having Development Potential. The submitted sites at Ness of Sound were assessed as having No Development Potential at this time.

The preferred option was pursued because the option was to ask the public and we did that in the MIR consultation. The public opinions expressed in the consultation matched the assessment made in the MIR SEA ER.

	Title	Preferred option pursued?
Issue D	Providing for the Cost of Housing Development	No

Final Option Adopted for Local Development Plan (LDP)

On the 11th March 2011 the Scottish Government Chief Planner issued a letter, which stated a change in the emphasis on provision of affordable housing to that in the existing SPP and that Planners should take note of the mention of 'innovative and flexible approaches' and a move away from the more rigid requirement to dictate a % of units. The letter makes it clear that in this current economic climate setting levels of affordable housing requirement which act to stifle overall levels of housing development are likely to be counter-productive.

In order to ensure sufficient reference to the requirement for affordable housing was included in the plan, whilst being mindful of the information contained in the letter from the SG it was decided to proceed with a policy which was supportive of the need for affordable housing and make a commitment to ensure adequate provision but through working in partnership with housing developers and providers rather setting mandatory contributions.

Conclusion:

Whilst neither the preferred option nor any of the alternative options were followed we took note of the responses from the MIR consultation and the letter from the Scottish Government and responded with a policy which was still supportive of the need for affordable housing but took into account the changes in the current economic climate. Policy H4 allows the planning team to work with developers and housing providers to obtain the best end result appropriate to each individual

development site and the current economic situation we find ourselves in.

Issue E	Title	Preferred option pursued?
	Parking Provision for New Development	Yes

Final Option Adopted for Local Development Plan (LDP)

The Parking Standards SGs implements the preferred option by including;

- Added flexibility for redevelopment projects for historic buildings and in Conservation Areas.
- Consideration of impact and appearance of parking
- Use of Travel Plans
- Relaxation of the standards to encourage well designed car-free housing developments

Conclusion

The preferred option was pursued because there was clear support from the public, consultees and assessed as the preferred option in the SEA process.

Issue F	Title	Preferred option pursued?
	Protection and Enhancement of Economic Growth and Development Opportunities	Yes

Final Option Adopted for Local Development Plan (LDP)

Policy ED1, ED2 and ED3 within the local plan are in line with the preferred option as are the policies contained within Supplementary Guidance – Business and Industry.

The sites that have been allocated within for business and industrial development within the supplementary guidance have come forward from the ‘call for sites’ process. These sites have been assessed in relation to the future uses provided by the submitter (e.g. industry, employment).

Issue G	Title	Preferred option pursued?
	Protection of Existing Employment and Retail Sites against change of use	Partially

Final Option Adopted for Local Development Plan (LDP)

Policy ED3 supports development which will promote the future vibrancy, vitality and sustainability of the area. Supplementary Guidance – Lerwick Town Centre will outline priorities for the Town Centre and provide detailed guidance on town centre developments.

Supplementary Guidance – Business and Industry contains policy on the sequential approach to be used within Lerwick in order to protect and enhance the viability of the Town Centre.

In addition there are policy mechanisms in place within this guidance to protect the

viability of rural settlements through Policy ED2 and within supplementary guidance.

Issue H	Title	Preferred option pursued?
	Shetland's Agricultural Land	No

Final Option Adopted for Local Development Plan (LDP)

The LDP has followed alternative option 1 and deleted the agricultural protection policy, because National Policy did not support maintaining such a policy and the SEA was inconclusive.

Issue I	Title	Preferred option pursued?
	Furthering the Conservation of Biodiversity	yes

Final Option Adopted for Local Development Plan (LDP)

Policy NH 3 pursues the furthering of biodiversity through Supplementary Guidance - Local Nature Conservation Sites and Supplementary Guidance - Local Landscape Areas.

Issue J	Title	Preferred option pursued?
	Planning for an ageing population	Yes

Final Option Adopted for Local Development Plan (LDP)

Policy H 2 has identified Areas of Best Fit throughout Shetland. Policy H 3 encourages development in sustainable locations to strengthen existing communities and avoid ineffectual scattering of scarce resources and provide access services and amenities to all members of the community. This will enable individuals to stay longer in their own homes.