

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

Replacement Dwellings and Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside

Supplementary Planning Guidance

September 2019



**CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening report is designed to determine whether or not the 'Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and programmes Regulations 2004.

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.1 The objective of Strategic Environmental Assessment is to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.
- 2.2 The SEA Regulations 2004 place an obligation on local authorities to undertake a SEA on plans or projects:
- That are required for town and country planning or land use; and
 - Set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to European Council Directive 85/337/EEC
- 2.3 The SPG sets the framework for development in the future, which means it could be considered a 'plan' or 'programme' within the meaning of the SEA Directive and could therefore require an 'environmental assessment'. The regulations advise that a specified set of criteria (set out in Schedule 1 of the regulations) should be used to demonstrate whether a plan should be subject of an SEA. These criteria have been considered in determining whether the SPG should be the subject of a SEA.

3. Background to the Replacement Dwellings and Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside SPG

- 3.1 The 'Replacement Dwellings and Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside' SPG applies to the Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd Local Planning Authority areas, and supports and supplements the relevant policies contained within the adopted Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP).
- 3.2 Changes in social and economic circumstances often mean there are dormant buildings in the countryside as they are not required and are practically unsuitable for the original use. The types of dormant buildings can include, for example, farm outbuildings, barns, schools, chapels etc. The types of buildings that are relevant to this Guidance are those that are no longer used for the original purpose, e.g. if the building in question is a domestic garage and the residential use of the dwelling continues, it is considered that the use of the garage has not ended. This SPG will provide further guidance in relation to the planning considerations in relation to applications for the conversion of buildings and replacement dwellings in the countryside. The 'countryside' in this context is defined as being sites located outside the development boundary of a settlement or cluster as defined within the JLDP.

4. SEA Screening

- 4.1 Though not part of the statutory Development Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance cover a range of issues, which generally interpret policies in the Development Plan. If an SPG is considered unlikely to have significant environmental effects through the screening process, then the conclusion will be that the SEA is not necessary.
- 4.2 To assess whether an SEA was required, the Responsible Authority (Anglesey County Council and Gwynedd Council) undertook a screening process based on a standard set of criteria as set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These criteria are set out in the table in Appendix 1 of this report, alongside the Council's response in relation to the SPG.
- 4.3 The SEA Regulations require that the consultation bodies (namely Natural Resources Wales and CADW) be consulted upon the screening assessment undertaken. No responses were received from CADW whilst Natural Resources Wales were satisfied that a SEA of the Guidance was not required.
- 4.4 The 'Replacement Dwellings and Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside' SPG was subject to public consultation between 21 February 2019 and 4 April 2019. Due consideration was given to all of the representations received and amendments to the Guidance were made accordingly. These amendments essentially provided further interpretation of the policy to ensure it would be applied consistently, and did not lead to significant changes in the SPG. Consequently, it was deemed that they did not affect the conclusions of the Screening Assessment.

5. Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 5.1 In addition to SEA, the council is also required to consider undertaking a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). HRA is the process used to determine whether a plan or project would have significant adverse effects upon the integrity of internationally designated sites of nature conservation importance, known as European sites or European offshore marine sites. The need for a HRA is set out within the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (which transposed EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC).
- 5.2 A HRA screening of the SPG was undertaken in accordance with the Habitats Regulations with the following conclusions made:
 - The SPG is primarily a guidance document and is not considered to alter the strategic policy framework;
 - It does not present new policies or proposals and serves only to expand on the existing policies in the JLDP relating to the provision of affordable housing in sustainable locations in the Plan Area.
 - The relevant policies of the JLDP in the SPG have already been subject to HRA;
 - The SPG is not a rigid land use allocation but sets the broad planning context and development principles associated with providing affordable housing;
 - The SPG does not introduce new proposals of a type and/or scale outside the parameters of the JLDP, or amend any of the proposed mitigation measures agreed;

- the primary effect or impact of the SPG will be facilitating sustainable development throughout the Plan Area. The SPG itself will not have any adverse impacts on the environment. Rather it will help to address environmental problems by ensuring affordable housing is designed to a high standard, is compliant with relevant Building regulations requirements and is appropriately located to promote sustainable living for occupants.

5.3 The Council concluded that there will be no significant adverse impact on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites as a direct result of the SPG, and therefore, considers that the Affordable Housing SPG will not require full appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations.

6. Statement of Reasons for Determination

6.1 It is considered that the 'Replacement Dwellings and Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside' SPG is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment. The SPG is not setting any new policies or allocations or amending policies in the adopted JLDP. Rather it is providing further guidance on existing policies contained within the Anglesey and Gwynedd JLDP, which has been subject to SEA.

6.2 It is determined that as a result of the screening undertaken by the Councils, along with the responses received from the statutory consultation bodies, a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required for the 'Replacement Dwellings and Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside' Supplementary Planning Guidance.

APPENDIX 1

The table below uses criteria taken from Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and programmes Regulations 2004 to determine if the SPG is likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

| SA Directive Criteria | Potential Effects of SPG | Is there a likely significant effect? |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular to: | | |
| 1.1 The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocation resources. | The SPG is primarily a guidance document and is not considered to alter the strategic policy framework. It does not present new policies or proposals nor does it amend current JLDP policies and serves only to expand on the existing policies in the JLDP relating to replacement dwellings and conversion of buildings in the countryside. The framework has already been set by the adopted JLDP policies which have already been subject to SEA. The SPG is not a rigid land use allocation but sets the broad planning context and development principles associated with the conversion of buildings in the countryside within the context set out in Policy TAI 7, CYF 6 AND TWR 2. | No |
| 1.2 The degree with which the plan or programme influences other plans and programme including those in a hierarchy. | The purpose of this SPG is to provide guidance on adopted JLDP policies. As such it will not influence other plans and programmes. It will only provide further additional details and will not introduce new policies nor amend existing adopted policies. | No |
| 1.3 The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental consideration in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development. | The SPG provides guidance with regards to replacement dwellings and conversion of buildings in the countryside in accordance with Policy TAI 7, CYF 6, TWR 2 and other relevant policies which were subject to SEA. The aim of this policy is to encourage rural communities to be more sustainable and to facilitate the linkages between | No |

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| | <p>home and work locations. Consequently it has no relevance to the integration of environmental considerations.</p> <p>However, it does have social and economic considerations with regards to sustainable development. The SPG will facilitate the aim of sustainable development by providing clear and consistent guidance on development in the countryside.</p> | |
| 1.4 Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme. | The SPG itself will not have any adverse impacts on the environment. The SPG ensures that environmental and landscape considerations are considered as part of the planning application process. Finding alternative uses to these buildings can contribute towards maintaining and improving the environment and the rural economy as well as protecting the traditional social fabric of rural areas. | No |
| 1.5 The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. waste management or water protection) | Not relevant. The SPG supplements adopted planning policies and is not relevant to the implementation of community legislation on the environment. The principle of development is considered through the JLDP which has been subject to SEA. | No |
| 2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: | | |
| 2.1 The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects. | It is considered that the effects of implementing of the SPG will be positive, as it will help mitigate against any harmful social/environmental impacts associated with development. | No |
| 2.2 The cumulative nature of the effects. | The cumulative impact of the effects of the Guidance should be positive with regard to the principles of sustainable development. | No |

| | | |
|--|--|----|
| 2.3 The trans-boundary nature of the effects. | The SPG will be limited for use within the Anglesey and Gwynedd Local Planning Authority Areas. | No |
| 2.4 The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents). | It is not considered that the SPG would present a risk to human health or the environment. It is considered that there are likely to be improvements to human health due to housing and economic opportunities being developed to meet needs. There will be a positive contribution to well-being. | No |
| 2.5 The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected). | The SPG covers the Anglesey and Gwynedd Local Planning Authority areas and will primarily have a positive effect on the resident population in these areas. | No |
| 2.6 The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: i) the special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit value; iii) Intensive land use | It is considered that the SPG will not have any effect on areas which have value/are vulnerable. Any planning application will be assessed against the relevant policies before planning permission is granted. | No |
| 2.7 The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status. | The SPG has no effect on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or protection status. Impacts on such areas will be considered through the application of other JLDP policies which have been subject to SEA. It is also noted that the SPG does not directly allocate land for particular development. | No |