

## Chapter 3 Stage A Scoping findings

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The first stage of the Strategic Environmental Assessment was the Scoping exercise which was summarised within the Derbyshire LTP3 SEA Scoping Report in June 2010. The Scoping Stage was found to be extremely useful in identifying the many environmental benefits that the Plan could contribute to, whilst also highlighting issues that needed careful consideration in developing the Plan. Later in this Environmental Report we examine the issues that required further consideration, but within this chapter we summarise the findings of the Scoping Stage and summarise the comments we received on the Scoping Report. In Annex 1 we include a list of all comments received during consultation and the action or response made.

### 3.2 Scoping Stages A1 to A4

- 3.2.1 The first four stages of the SEA undertaken as part of the Scoping exercise established:-
- other relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives
  - collated environmental baseline information
  - used this to identify potential challenges and opportunities
  - developed 23 draft SEA objectives
- 3.2.2 This stage was undertaken thoroughly as we saw this as a crucial step in the SEA process to give a robust foundation for the remaining stages of SEA. This process was undertaken as a topic-based approach which sought to cover not only the environmental topics listed in the SEA Directive, but also those covered by the NATA sub-objectives, Health Impact Assessment and potential significant issues that were identified at the pre-screening stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment. The seven topic areas, examined within the Scoping Report, and a summary of the identified environmental issues through Scoping are set out in Table 3.1 below:-

Table 3.1 Summary table of topic-based approach

Overarching Topic	SEA Topics covered	NATA sub-objectives covered	Health Impact Assessment topics covered	Habitats Regulations topics covered	Environmental issues and opportunities
1. Landscape and townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>landscape</li> <li>townscape</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated landscape and townscape of Peak District National Park</li> <li>Setting, including traffic and transport infrastructure</li> <li>Localised erosion and damage</li> <li>Tranquillity, noise and light pollution</li> <li>Tourism</li> </ul>
2. Biodiversity, flora, fauna and soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>biodiversity</li> <li>flora</li> <li>fauna</li> <li>soils</li> <li>air</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>biodiversity</li> <li>noise</li> <li>water environment</li> <li>local air quality</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>disturbance due to tourism pressures</li> <li>air quality</li> <li>water quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Condition of wildlife sites</li> <li>Severance and role of transport network for green corridors</li> <li>Road casualties</li> <li>Light pollution</li> <li>Soil erosion</li> <li>Construction impacts</li> <li>Tourism</li> </ul>
3. Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cultural heritage</li> <li>air</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>townscape</li> <li>heritage</li> <li>local air quality</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting, including traffic and transport infrastructure</li> <li>Use of materials and design</li> <li>Localised damage, including Swarkestone Causeway</li> <li>Derwent Valley World Heritage Site</li> </ul>
4. Climatic factors, including greenhouse gases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>climatic factors</li> <li>air</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>local air quality</li> <li>greenhouse gases</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change</li> <li>CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>Flooding</li> </ul>
5. Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>water environment</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>water quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Run off from roads</li> </ul>
6. Material assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>material assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>public accounts</li> <li>business users and providers</li> <li>consumer users</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain the transport asset</li> <li>Material usage and reuse</li> <li>Energy and fuel usage</li> <li>Environmental management</li> </ul>
7. Population and human health, including noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>population</li> <li>human health</li> <li>air</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>noise</li> <li>physical fitness</li> <li>road collisions</li> <li>security</li> <li>community severance</li> <li>access to the transport system</li> <li>local air quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>transport to work,</li> <li>shops, schools and healthcare</li> <li>walking and cycling</li> <li>community severance</li> <li>frequency and severity of crashes</li> <li>collisions causing injury and fatal casualties</li> <li>air pollution and noise</li> <li>ageing population and increasing disability</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population growth/ housing provision/ transport usage</li> <li>Increasing elderly population</li> <li>Limiting long-term illness/ mental and physical disability</li> <li>Physical exercise and obesity</li> <li>Road casualties</li> <li>Community severance</li> <li>Air quality in air quality management areas</li> <li>Noise</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Stage A5 Scoping Report Consultation

#### Summary of consultation responses

- 3.3.1 Responses from nine environmental bodies were received during the consultation on the draft Scoping Report. Nothing significant was raised within these responses with feedback being generally positive with a few suggested minor changes. We did however make some changes that are worth listing here for clarity:-

#### Light Pollution in relation to landscape and biodiversity

- 3.3.2 Within the draft Scoping Report we suggested that light pollution should be scoped out because it was expected that light pollution would not significantly increase over the lifetime of the Plan due to requirements for carbon reduction and the need for financial savings on energy usage. The Peak District National Park Authority queried this trend and suggested that light pollution was predicted to increase over the next decade. In addition, our landscape section highlighted that this assumption of a likelihood of reduced light pollution was based upon a discussion paper in relation to spending to save for highway lighting, that had not as yet formed into actual policy. The view was that this should be examined as part of this SEA to help form the future policy on this. We therefore are considering light pollution within this Environmental Report.

#### Nitrogen Deposition in relation to biodiversity

- 3.3.3 Our ecologist asked if we could consider nitrogen deposition as this has been raised as a potential issue relating to the Waste Core Strategy. Following this we examined this in relation to the SSSIs within the County. This found that 59 SSSIs were located within 500m of a road, which was identified as the distance that traffic-related deposition would make a contribution. Using data from the Air Pollution Information System website we examined the levels of nitrogen deposition at sites that were dissected by roads or close to busy roads. Most sites showed levels of nitrogen deposition over threshold levels. Levels of nitrogen deposition did not show any patterns, with similar levels close to low trafficked roads as high levels. Indeed further away from roads nitrogen deposition did not significantly reduce. One factor in those sites examined was that topography seemed to play a significant role in the levels of nitrogen deposition. Although we may not be able to specifically relate transport to the nitrogen deposition levels, we have decided to consider this within this Environmental Report in respect to whether more or less traffic is likely to be generated by the Derbyshire LTP3 strategy.

#### 'All environments matter' in relation to landscape and historic environments

- 3.3.4 A number of comments acknowledged that although we had referred to the fact that all environments are important and matter, that our approach still emphasised the exceptional. This was not intentional and we have attempted to fully embrace the principles of the European Landscape Convention in bringing together this Environmental Report. This is also reflected in terms of the historic environment and we have embraced the principles of PPS 5 'Planning for the historic environment' which places more emphasis on the importance of locally important heritage assets, as well as designated assets. This is also of relevance in terms of biodiversity and we have also embraced the ecosystems approach which is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

#### Landscape Character Assessment

- 3.3.5 Related to the above, English Heritage suggested that we should consider 'setting' rather than visual intrusion alone to better meet with PPS 5. Although this comment related to historic assets, this is something that equally relates to landscape, which was highlighted by the Friends of the Peak District. 'Setting', in addition to visual intrusion, incorporates noise, dust, vibration and traffic levels. These had all been considered within the Scoping Report as separate issues and generally all but visual intrusion from transport infrastructure had been scoped out. Taking this forward, in relation to the principles described in 3.3.4 above, we are considering setting, but visual intrusion from transport infrastructure is likely to remain as the key issue in taking this forward.

## Geodiversity

- 3.3.6 Friends of the Peak District considered that geodiversity did not receive adequate attention in either the landscape or biodiversity chapters. This was in view of the county having unstable landscapes, of which the transport network can impact upon e.g. landslips. This was queried with our landscape section who said that geodiversity is a major contributor to landscape character and so it is already considered as part of the landscape character assessment. In terms of landslips our ecologist highlighted that these issues are of a localised nature and it is unlikely that this would be a strategic issue that would require additional consideration. Therefore it was decided that no further assessment of geodiversity was required, but to ensure that it was considered at a localised level we have included a specific reference to geodiversity with the relevant objective.

## Air Pollution

- 3.3.6 Air pollution was scoped out of further consideration within the Scoping Report. This was based upon the fact that current declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) on County Council controlled roads, only affect one property in Derbyshire. Chesterfield was highlighted as a borderline case, where the declaration of an AQMA had been expected, but had since seen pollution levels reduce. Projections of air quality levels showed that it was likely that air pollution would continue to improve over the plan period and that further issues would be likely only in the short and medium term. However, Chesterfield Borough Council commented that the AQMA was not declared due to a moderation of figures by central government rather than actual falls in levels of pollution. We have therefore decided to retain an objective relating to reducing levels of air pollution from local traffic in AQMAs to ensure that a future potential declaration is considered within this Environmental Report.

## Supporting a resilient economy

- 3.3.7 The Scoping stage focussed on undertaking a Strategic Environmental Assessment, rather than undertaking a full Sustainability Appraisal. Therefore, the baseline assessment for the local economy was not undertaken. However, since the SEA Scoping Report was published, the Authority has undertaken a Local Economic Assessment: Initial Evidence Base collection which identified a number of key findings which are associated with many of the issues within the SEA topics. It was also clear that there could be conflict between the economy and the environmental topics and that the economy should be considered within this environmental report. Therefore, at the request of our Chief Executives Department, following the Scoping stage we added a SEA objective to support a resilient economy and to consider the impact of the LTP3 Strategy upon the economy within this Environmental Report. We are not though undertaking a full Sustainability Appraisal.

## Draft SEA Objectives

- 3.3.7 Most consultees agreed with the draft SEA objectives that had been developed by examining the environmental baseline and issues and opportunities. However, there were a number of suggested changes to the wording to ensure that the objectives were more focussed and to take the opportunity to seek wider benefits such as to tie in with other policies or seek enhancements. Other comments related to the fact that some objectives were similar and that they could be condensed by merging some. After review, the 23 objectives were reduced to 13, however a number of sub-objectives were retained to ensure that the overarching objective did not lose the focus that had been teased out during the examination of the environmental baseline. See Chapter 4 for further information on the review of objectives.

## 3.4 Scoping Stage data gaps

- 3.4.1 Within the SEA Scoping Report we identified a number of data gaps. Some of these we said we did not intend to consider further due to various reasons explained within the report. However, we did highlight other data that we intended to collect. Where we identified data gaps, we provide an update on progress in filling these gaps:-

### Visual intrusion from transport infrastructure

- 3.4.2 Within the Scoping Report we identified that it was clear that there was much anecdotal evidence that visual intrusion from transport infrastructure was having an impact on landscape characters and heritage assets, however there was no data to which locations were particularly affected. Following

the Scoping Report we considered this further but came to the conclusion that because there were many factors in determining 'impact' such as number of assets, types of asset e.g. lining, signs, street lights, bollards etc, scale of assets, use of different materials, locations of assets it was difficult to undertake a desktop assessment that would prove useful at a strategic level. In considering this, we believe that the best method at a strategic level is to use number of signs as a proxy to the likelihood of an area being impacted upon. Within this Environmental Report we have combined this with a review of the areas of high environmental value into what are now termed areas of environmental sensitivity. This review has considered the European Landscape Convention and considered not the most valued landscapes, but considered the landscapes that are most vulnerable to changes. Therefore, our methodology for taking visual intrusion forward will be to consider the introduction of infrastructure against the sensitivity of the landscape. To target enhancements and areas of where sensitivity is greatest we will map the density of signs by Landscape Character areas. The dataset for the sign assets is currently being finalised so we will have this data ready for when implementation begins. We currently do not have the data set for Landscape Description Units for the Peak District National Park which we will also need to ensure that the whole county is mapped.

### **Visual intrusion from traffic**

- 3.4.3 We noted in the Scoping Report that we have data across the county about traffic levels but that we do not have any data to what magnitude of impact this causes visually because this is a very subjective issue. We received a comment that this was an important issue on many routes. In taking this forward at a strategic level, we will need to consider traffic growth across the County to act as a proxy to whether visual intrusion from traffic is getting worse or better.

### **Light pollution**

- 3.4.4 As described in paragraph 3.3.2 above, we initially scoped out light pollution. Since this has been reinstated, we also highlighted that light pollution information used within the Scoping Report was over ten years old. Therefore we have examined other methods and data sources for more information. As a first stage we have used the same methodology as described for visual intrusion using the data set of street lighting locations and mapped this by Landscape Description Unit. This has provided us with a proxy for light pollution in the County that can be updated during implementation. This mapping is provided in Chapter 7. Unfortunately this data does not cover the Peak District National Park and we will need to source the dataset of Landscape Description Units for the whole county to be mapped using this methodology. However, the National Park Authority are currently mapping light pollution for us using data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Satellite Information System, but we do not know how this data will be presented at this stage.

### **Impact of transport on designated wildlife sites**

- 3.4.5 The scoping stage identified that there has not been any particular assessment of the effect transport has on designated wildlife sites. During consultation, the only issue raised relating to the impact of transport was by nitrogen deposition. This is discussed in more detail in paragraph 3.3.3 above, following which we undertook a further screening of designated sites. In terms of taking the impact of transport on biodiversity forward it is clear that at a strategic level there is unlikely to be any further data collection that we undertake. Where transport is identified as an issue in future we can examine this at a localised level and develop localised mitigation. However, through examination of the many issues it is clear that reducing traffic levels will have a positive effect on biodiversity. Therefore, at a strategic level we will consider the impact of the transport strategy on traffic growth, and thereby whether it is offering a positive contribution to biodiversity, rather than considering particular biodiversity issues.

### **Habitat fragmentation**

- 3.4.6 As part of the scoping stage we mapped wildlife sites alongside the transport network to attempt to highlight any possible fragmentation of habitats. During consultation it was highlighted that Local Planning Authorities are undertaking studies of green infrastructure which could be used to supplement information. We do not intend to undertake further mapping of habitat fragmentation, but we should be aware of the benefits of linking our green infrastructure into habitats to provide green corridors where possible.

### **Light pollution impacts on biodiversity**

- 3.4.7 No views about this were expressed during consultation of the Scoping Report. We therefore consider that specific issues will be highlighted as and when they are known. Overall however we will consider that any light pollution reduction will be a benefit, particularly if focussed around the most environmentally sensitive areas as mapped in Chapter 7.

### **Carbon Dioxide Emissions**

- 3.4.8 Through examination of carbon emissions we found that there was minimal information to how the transport sector contributes to CO2 emissions and also how County Council employees contribute to CO2 by commuting to work. Following the Scoping Report, we have been developing a Road Transport Carbon Reduction Strategy which will examine this in more detail. More information can be found in Annex C of the draft Derbyshire LTP3 Strategy.