

# Moving Rutland Forward – strategic environmental assessment post adoption statement

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Moving Rutland Forward (MRF) – Rutland’s fourth local transport plan (LTP4) was adopted by Full Council in September 2019.

MRF sets out our long term transport strategy for the county for the period 2018 – 2036. Produced in conjunction, as a sub document, was the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) which runs until 2029<sup>1</sup>.

This document is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) post adoption statement for MRF and the ROWIP – the preparation of which is a requirement of Regulation 16 of *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004*<sup>2</sup>.

Regulation 16 requires that this ‘statement’ is published as soon as possible after the formal adoption of the report and covers:

- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan (chapter 2);
- how the SEA has been taken into account (chapter 3);
- how the results of the associated consultations have been taken into account (chapter 4);
- the reasons for choosing the plan as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with (chapter 5); and
- any measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme (chapter 6).

The remainder of this post adoption statement answers these questions.

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<sup>1</sup> A copy MRF, our ROWIP and the associated strategic environmental assessment (along with all other associated documents) are available online: <https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-community/transport/transport-strategy/> or can be viewed at Rutland County Council offices and Rutland libraries.

<sup>2</sup> *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004*, SI 2014/1633. Norwich: The Stationary Office. [Accessed 6 April 2020]. Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/part/4/made>

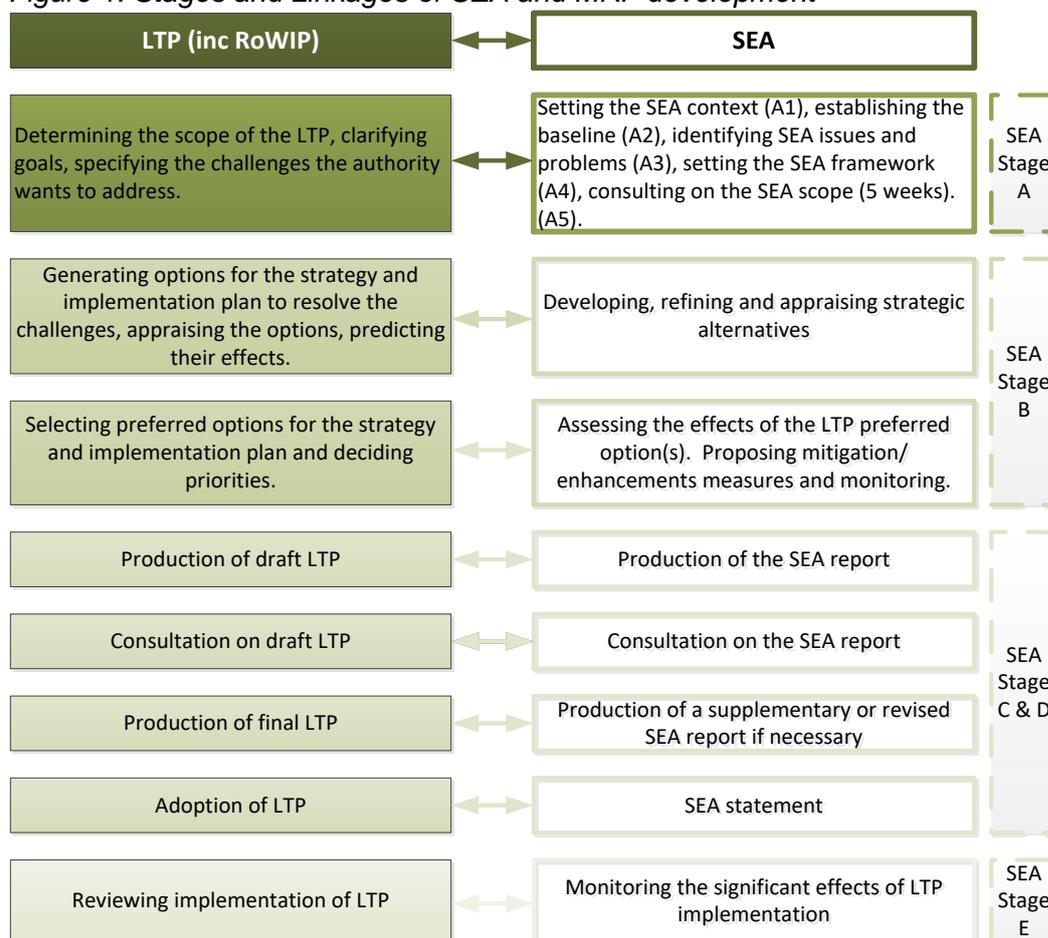
## 2 HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

To ensure Moving Rutland Forward took environmental factors fully into consideration, a strategic environmental assessment was carried out on both MRF and the ROWIP (herein referred to collectively as MRF). A separate habitat regulations assessment was also carried out and is available separately.

## 3 INTEGRATION OF MRF AND THE SEA

MRF and the SEA were developed in parallel, ensuring full integration and a better understanding of any environmental impacts associated with the plan. Figure 1 shows the key stages of the SEA process and how they linked to the development of MRF.

Figure 1: Stages and Linkages of SEA and MRF development<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Adapted from: Department for Transport. (2009). *Guidance on Local Transport Plans*. Available at:

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110505104156/http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/165237/ltp-guidance.pdf> (Accessed: 6 April 2020).

One of the first elements of developing the SEA was to establish the existing environmental conditions and likely future trends in Rutland. As part of this process a set of nine SEA objectives were developed and used to underpin the environmental assessment

During the process of developing MRF it was necessary to check the challenges, goals and solutions identified, against these SEA objectives. The purpose of this was to ensure that they were compatible with each other and that any necessary mitigation could be taken.

Overall the plan was found to have a positive environmental impact – with no significant environmental effects resulting from its implementation. However it did highlight some minor incompatibilities and some uncertainties in terms of environmental impact. These were reviewed, and it was concluded that no additional mitigation was required as any minor environmental impacts could be managed through good project planning, environmental assessments where necessary and planning policy. In addition these negative impacts were likely in most cases to be offset by the positive impacts of other goals, solutions and objectives.

As a result of this finding (along with consultation feedback), wording within MRF was updated to reflect, where required, the production of project/ scheme specific SEAs (and/ or HRAs), to ensure negative impacts are minimised or mitigated.

## 4 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Regulation 16 of the SEA Regulations requires that we identify the results of the consultation and how they have been taken in to account.

With regards specifically to environmental considerations, when developing our fourth local transport plan, statutory consultees (The Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) were sent a copy of our Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report for review (July/ August 2017). The feedback from the scoping exercise was noted and where required updates were made. A copy of the feedback received can be found as appendix I in the full SEA (now adopted)<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to the scoping report feedback, statutory consultees were re consulted during the public consultation on Moving Rutland Forward and associated assessments – this took place for just over 12 weeks, starting in October 2018. Along with the statutory consultees, stakeholder groups and members of the public were able to respond to the consultation.

Full details regarding the public consultation – including commonly reported feedback themes and how they were addressed can be found in the Moving Rutland Forward Consultation Report<sup>1</sup>.

## 5 REASONS FOR CHOOSING MOVING RUTLAND FORWARD, AS ADOPTED, IN THE LIGHT OF OTHER REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

Due to the small scale of the area and the limited funding likely to be available to address transport issues, only two options were considered. These were the “without MRF” scenario and a “with MRF” (with the emphasis being on meeting the council’s strategic objectives).

The SEA evaluated the impact of both scenarios on the environmental baseline, in light of county’s growing and ageing population.

The evaluation, as set out in the SEA, concluded that a “without MRF” scenario would have an overall negative impact on the SEA objectives and a “with MRF” scenario would be likely to have an overall neutral to positive impact on the SEA objectives. Therefore it was agreed to proceed “with MRF” due to the likely environmental benefits.

## 6 MONITORING

Section 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 states that the post adoption report should set out *‘the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme’*<sup>4</sup>. Section 17 goes on to say that *‘the responsible authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action’*<sup>4</sup>.

Our Strategic Environmental Assessment did not find there to be any significant environmental effects associated with the implementation of the Local Transport Plan or Rights of Way Improvement Plan. As such, no specific monitoring processes have been set up for this purpose. However, where required we will undertake further environmental assessments of any future large scale highway or transport projects that may come forward. Within these assessments we will consider opportunities not only to protect, but also enhance the surrounding environment and habitats.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004*, SI 2014/1633. Norwich: The Stationary Office. [Accessed 6 April 2020]. Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/part/4/made>