



# Promoting sustainable development

## Environmental Assessment of Strategic Plans

Halcrow has extensive experience in conducting strategic environmental assessments and influencing national environmental policies.

Halcrow has a significant and successful track record of working on the following types of strategic assessment;

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA);
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA);
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA); and
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

### Our services

We frequently work on projects that combine two or more of these assessment types and wherever possible share resources to maximise efficiency and value for money. We work with a diverse range of competent authorities on a wide variety of project types, from national to local government. Our SEA experience includes;

- Development planning; national development plans and policies, regional spatial and economic strategies, Local Transport Plans and Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)
- Flood risk and coastal defence; flood risk management plans and strategies, shoreline management plans

We add **significant value to clients' needs by complementing our core SEA teams with additional technical specialists.** Drawing on

national and international expertise, we provide strategic advice and assessment in key areas such as:

- landscape characterisation and sensitivity analysis
- air quality assessments
- water resources and strategic flood risk
- strategic biodiversity assessments
- traffic and transportation planning and modelling
- cultural heritage assessments

We have in-house professionals offering specialised graphics, new media, IT and GIS support.

We have significant and extensive experience in public consultation and facilitated dialogue.

We also have extensive experience in assessments of 'lower tier' plans, such as 'EIA's. Our knowledge of all different types and levels of assessment allows us to select the most appropriate assessment types and integrate them when necessary.

### Our approach

Our distinctive approach to SEA is based on working proactively with our clients to meet their specific needs. Our clients benefit from our experience of the most **up-to-date** application of **environmental assessments across a wide range of sectors.**

Our clients can expect to **build their own SEA capabilities** and demonstrate **cost-effective, robust and auditable compliance** that meets, and **where beneficial exceeds, the statutory SEA requirements.** We work closely with clients to develop an **integrated and tailored approach** to environmental assessment and plan-making.

## Delivering value – case studies

### ■ Scottish Government

The Scottish Government is one of our key SEA clients. We have successfully delivered SEAs at the highest strategic level, including:

- Proposals for the Scottish Climate Change Bill
- Scottish Soil Framework
- Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture
- Scotland's Offshore Wind Plan (including HRA)

Our work on the Scottish Soil Framework and the Forward Strategy for Scottish Agriculture projects were recognised by both the Scottish Government and Scottish Natural Heritage as examples of best practice in SEA.

### ■ Sustainability Advice

Halcrow recently contributed to the Scottish Government's guidance on "*Consideration of Climatic Factors within SEA*". We have also produced guidance on SEA of multi-modal transport studies for the UK Government and participated in a study for the European Parliament to develop indicators of Sustainable Development. Halcrow also works closely with the Royal Town Planning Institute and has recently issued advice on Planning Policy Statements relating to climate change and renewable energy.

### ■ Local Authority SA/SEAs

We have undertaken a number of Sustainability Appraisals (SAs) of statutory development plan documents that incorporate SEA. These include the Core Strategies of Dacorum, Three Rivers, St Albans, Watford, Cannock and Southampton. We are currently working on Local Transport Plans (LTP3s) for the West of England Partnership, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Oxfordshire. As part of these SEA commissions we are undertaking HRA for all of them and HIA for two of them.

We have also undertaken SEA for local authorities in the following areas;

- AONB Management Plans;
- Regional Economic Strategies;
- Public Realm Design Guides;
- Tourism Strategies;
- Development masterplans in UK, Jordan, Barbados;
- Parks and Playing Field Strategies; and
- Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks

### ■ The Highland Council

We have recently delivered a number of SEA projects for the Highland Council, including:

- A96 Growth Corridor Development Masterplan
- Nigg Yard Redevelopment Masterplan
- Local Transport Strategy

Each assessment involved different Council departments. However, added value was delivered in understanding the client's key objectives from one assessment and delivering efficiencies throughout.

### ■ City of Edinburgh Council, North Edinburgh Transport Action Plan

We provided advice to the City of Edinburgh Council that full SEA was not necessary for this plan, as well as undertaking the screening assessments required to support our findings. The decision to follow our advice directly saved the Council over £10,000 in consultancy fees.

### ■ South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium Regional Transport Plan SEA/HRA

This project involved extensive consultation and the introduction of a unique method to comprehensively assess a range of policies, strategies and transport schemes. Significant efficiency savings were achieved by combining SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) processes. The final report was highly commended by the Countryside Council for Wales.

### ■ Flood Risk Management – SEA/HRA

Working for the Environment Agency, we have undertaken SEAs and associated HRAs, for a suite of flood risk management plans and strategies throughout England and Wales; embedding sustainability within flood risk management planning.

We are also leading the development of a best practice approach to SEA and HRA for the new national programme of Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans in Ireland through our work on the pilot studies, working closely with the Office of Public Works and the Environmental Protection Agency.

#### Contact us

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