

Review of Policy 14: Safeguarding of Resources and Areas of Search

1. Introduction

1.1 Policy 14: Safeguarding of Resources and Areas of Search aims to conserve natural resources for future generations, while also promoting sustainable economic development by making sure that major sites are retained for specific uses. The policy also identifies appropriate areas for large and intrusive developments. The purpose of this paper is to examine Policy 14 in light of changes in national policy and local context. It will also consider whether the policy meets the requirements of Scottish Planning Policy and other national planning documents, and whether it forms a sound basis for safeguarding natural resources and identifying appropriate areas of search.

2. Approach

2.1 The policy does not support any development which degrades or makes key strategic resources unavailable, i.e. water environment, important mineral deposits and sites which may be required for the future delivery of infrastructure such as waste facilities.

2.2 The policy also identifies areas of search, in order to ensure that major waste, mineral and energy generating facilities are located in appropriate locations.

2.3 The policy refers to the following supplementary guidance, which detail how the policy objectives will be achieved;

- SG Safeguarding 1: Protection and conservation of the water Environment
- SG Safeguarding2: Protection and conservation of agricultural land
- SG Safeguarding3: Protection and conservation of trees and woodland
- SG Safeguarding4: Safeguarding transportation facilities
- SG Safeguarding5: Safeguarding employment land
- SG Safeguarding6: safeguarding oil and gas sites
- SG Safeguarding7: Areas of search for minerals
- SG Safeguarding8: Areas of search for waste facilities
- SG Safeguarding9: Open Space

3. Background

National context

3.1 The conservation of natural resources is a key part of sustainable development. The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 reinforces the need for policy 14 by requiring development plans to contribute to sustainable development.

3.1 Scottish Planning Policy 2010 (SPP) supports the broad principle of safeguarding resources and identifying areas of search when it states that planning “*involves promoting and facilitating development while protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment*”. SPP directly supports the need to safeguard natural resources, pointing out that “*Planning authorities should... ensure that new development safeguards and enhances an area’s environmental quality*”. SPP also identifies prime agricultural land as a finite resource which should be protected.

- 3.2 SPP also emphasises the need for current and future road networks and facilities to be protected from development which may compromise safety, efficiency and expansion.
- 3.3 The protection of employment land and oil and gas sites in Policy 14 is also supported by SPP, when it states that “*key strategic sites for business use should be protected from inappropriate uses and development which would compromise their quality, accessibility or marketability as a business location*”.
- 3.4 SPP directly supports the ‘areas of search’ approach adopted in policy 14. For example, SPP requires planning authorities to identify ‘*appropriate areas of search*’ for mineral extraction and waste management facilities”.
- 3.5 The safeguarding of open space is supported by SPP, which requires planning authorities to protect open space.

Strategic/regional context

- 3.11 The proposed Strategic Development Plan (SDP) broadly supports the need for policy 14 by *including the need to “protect and improve our valued assets and resources” as a key aim of the plan*. The SDP supports the protection of sites which may be required in the future for the delivery of transportation improvements and waste facilities, when it states that there is a need to “*improve the essential strategic infrastructure necessary to allow the economy to grow over the long term*”.

4. Drivers of change

- 4.1 There have not been any significant changes to national policy/legislation since Policy 14 was written.

5. Summary of main points

- 6.1 Policy 14 aims to conserve natural resources for future generations, while also promoting sustainable economic development by making sure that major sites are retained for specific uses. The policy also identifies areas that may be appropriate for large and intrusive developments. National and regional planning policy supports the need for Policy 14. The policy provides a sound and robust basis for the protection of key strategic resources and the identification of appropriate ‘areas of search’. No changes are proposed to the policy.

References

- Aberdeen City and Shire *Proposed Strategic Development Plan* (2013)
Aberdeenshire Council (2012) *Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan*
Scottish Government (2010) *Scottish Planning Policy*

