

Planning and Environment

STATS Consulting and Allied Technical Services in Environmental Planning

- Environmental surveys and monitoring
- Prediction and modelling of potential environmental impacts
- Risk assessment and design of mitigation measures
- Preparation of specialist environmental reports in support of planning applications
- Full EIA and preparation of Environmental Statements
- Construction stage implementation plans, monitoring and verification

Environmental considerations have become a key component in the UK's planning processes, driven by European and national legislation and regulation, and a raft of policies and guidance down through national and regional to local planning authority level. Failure to take adequate account of a wide variety of environmental issues now provides grounds, and is often cited as a reason for, refusing planning consent.

STATS offers wide-ranging environmental consultancy and allied technical services in respect of regional spatial strategies and local development documents and in relation to individual planning applications, public enquiries and appeals.

We can lead and co-ordinate a complete environmental impact assessment, as discussed overleaf, or provide specialist discipline input into a wider EIA and master planning project team. For non-EIA applications, we routinely provide environmental assessment reports in our specialist areas.

STATS' core competencies in environmental planning include:

- Air quality and climate
- Archaeological geophysics
- Ecology, including habitats, protected species and biodiversity
- Energy generation, efficiency and SAP rating
- Flooding risk assessment and drainage
- Land quality and contaminated land remediation
- Land stability, ground engineering and foundations
- Noise and vibration and acoustic design
- Sustainability assessment, e.g. Code for Sustainable Homes
- Water resources and quality

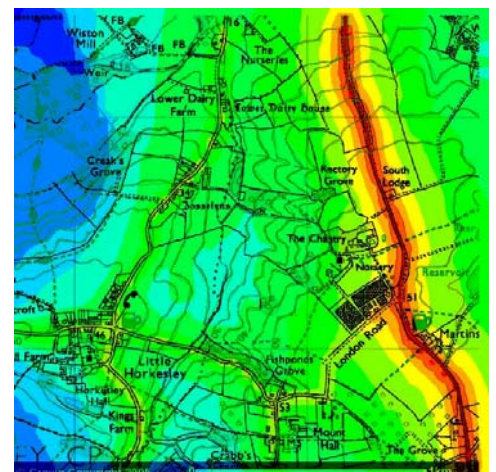
In preparing individual planning submissions it is important to allow for adequate time to both undertake any necessary surveys, taking into account factors like wildlife survey seasons for different species, assess the data and make any resulting adjustments to the development proposals.



Environmentally sensitive site assessment



Environmental monitoring of ground gases for land quality assessment



Noise impact modelling

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Environmental Impact Assessment

- Screening and Scoping Studies
- Baseline Surveys and Assessment
- Forecasting, Impact Assessment and Mitigation Design
- Project Management and Environmental Statements
- Project Implementation and Verification

Managing the process

During the process of environmental impact assessment (EIA) a number of straightforward questions are posed concerning a proposed development. The answers to these questions may not all be simple to formulate and may require a significant amount of time to study. An EIA is also often run in parallel with the site master planning and design process, which must accommodate all the adopted mitigation measures resulting from the EIA.

At STATS we strive to achieve several important management objectives for EIA projects, namely: good communications with the planning authority, their consultees and within the developer's own team; a clear professional focus on the environmental issues that actually matter; and setting and meeting a realistic programme.

A formal EIA typically represents a substantial commitment in both time and expenditure by the promoter of a development because of its breadth of study. For large scale or sensitive projects an Environmental Statement will be an essential requirement for the planning authority and indeed should be beneficial to the developer. However, for intermediate and less sensitive developments, we advise establishing whether the genuine concerns of the planning authority and others potentially affected by the proposed development can be addressed in a more selective and direct manner by preparing the appropriate technical reports in support of a planning application.

Delivering the science and engineering

EIA is all about teamwork and STATS can assemble and manage a full EIA project team built around its own core in-house competencies, but to which it may often be appropriate to add one or more specialist consultants depending upon the nature of the project and the local sensitivities.

Understanding the EIA process

The key questions	The steps required to answer them
Is an EIA required?	Screening – Under the EIA regulations, the planning authority decides on the basis of the applicant's outline proposals
What needs to be studied?	Scoping – Carried out by the applicant in consultation with all relevant interested parties
What's there now?	Baseline surveys – Desk and field studies designed to establish what the current conditions and features are
What's proposed?	Master planning and design – The vision and detail of the development and its reach into its environs
How will it be built?	Construction planning – The measures to be taken to minimise construction impacts and conserve resources
How will it be operated?	The business plan – what activities the developer and any prospective occupiers have planned for the site
What will change with time?	The environmental forecast – over the design life of the development many factors are likely to change both on site and in the wider environment, e.g. climate, technology and transportation
What are the risks?	The impacts – A potentially long list of losses and gains, both beneficial and detrimental to the environment
Are they significant?	Quantitative risk assessment – The process of weighing scientifically the actual risks posed
What will be done in mitigation?	Planning and design evolution – The iterative process of proposing and valuing mitigation measures and selectively adopting them into the master plan/design
Any residual effects?	The lasting impacts – Features arising from the development whose impacts are not unacceptable
Is the proposed development acceptable?	The conclusion – The outcome achieved from trying to mitigate every potentially significant impact in a manner acceptable to the stakeholders involved.
Can you prove it?	The verification – The implementation and verification of the adopted designs and mitigation measures.

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