

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement for the DRAFT Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

July 2013

1. This statement assesses the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive¹) for the DRAFT Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (AHSPD) which relates to the provision of affordable housing in line with Core Strategy Policies CP5 and CP6.
2. Supplementary Planning Documents do not form part of the statutory development plan but provide guidance on implementing adopted policies. The purpose of this AHSPD is to set out the Council's approach to delivering affordable housing in accordance with the Local Plan and national policy. It includes the range of approaches, standards and mechanisms required to deliver affordable housing which meets local needs and contributes towards attaining mixed sustainable communities and a balanced housing market. It provides a clear and consistent approach to assist development management officers, the Planning Committee, landowners, developers, applicants, Registered Providers, Parish and Town Council and members of the public in understanding the requirements for the provision of affordable housing on all residential and mixed use development sites in the District.
3. The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 do not require Sustainability Appraisal to be undertaken as part of the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents. However, planning authorities must still ensure that they have met the requirements of the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.
4. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required for certain plans and programmes under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The SEA Directive was transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
5. Where significant effects are likely², the SEA Directive makes SEA mandatory for plans and programmes:
 - a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent for projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (85/337/EEC); or

¹ European Directive 2001/42/EC

² As covered under Article 3(1) of the Directive

- b) which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).
6. In relation to (a) above, the AHSPD is related to town and country planning and will be part of the framework for future development, some of which may include developments which will require an Environmental Impact Assessment. In relation to (b) above, the AHSPD Screening Assessment under the Habitats Directive shows that significant effects upon Natura2000 sites **are not likely**. That assessment is shown in a separate Habitat Regulations Screening document for the AHSPD.

The Assessment

7. In order to ascertain whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required, the Authority (as the *'responsible authority'*) must determine whether or not the Supplementary Planning Document is likely to have significant environmental effects. Table 1 overleaf sets out the screening assessment undertaken for the AHSPD. The Council is required to consult on the SEA Screening Assessment with the SEA consultation bodies³. Any comments from these bodies will be taken into account in further progressing the AHSPD.

Conclusion

8. The screening assessment concludes that the AHSPD **will not have impacts that require further assessment** as the AHSPD is a tool that merely explains the practical application of an existing policy in the Core Strategy (which itself has been subject to SEA). The AHSPD makes no policy decisions, nor is it location-specific. As such there can be no direct environmental impacts to assess. There are possibly some minor environmental benefits associated with the AHSPD where it requires a higher environmental standard of construction than mainstream housing. However this is minimal and only applicable in the context of cumulative impacts with other plans and strategies (e.g. the Core Strategy) where SEA has already considered those minor benefits.

³ Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England

Table 1. Strategic Environmental Assessment

The AHSPD has been assessed against the criteria in Schedule 14 of the 2004 Regulations, as contained in the table below.

Criteria in Schedule 1 of 2004 Regulations	Potential effects of the SPD
Characteristics of the plan, having regard to:	
The degree to which the SPD sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	The SPD will support the Core Strategy policies CP5 and CP6, it will not in itself influence the principle of the development of affordable housing in any location. It will not set a new framework for projects, the policy framework is established within the Core Strategy which has already been subject to SEA. The SPD will not allocate resources. The SPD sets out the mechanics of applying the policy – it is in effect a procedural document that explains the existing policy structure.
The degree to which the SPD influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	Whilst the SPD sits within the hierarchy of plans contained within the Local Development Framework the SPD will not influence other plans. It sits below the Core Strategy and Development Policies and is itself not part of the Development Plan.
The relevance of the SPD for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	The purpose of the SPD is to ensure that the delivery of affordable housing is achieved: it will have no effect on the aims of (environmental) sustainable development. The SPD does set out some steer towards the construction and layout standards expected of affordable housing and so there may be some small positive effect on environmental objectives related to climate change.
Environmental problems relevant to the SPD	None are identified either directly or indirectly that arise as a result of the SPD.
The relevance of the SPD for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	The SPD sets out guidance on implementing affordable housing, but the principle of the housing and the suitability of the specific sites is left to other mechanisms: Core Strategy. The Core Strategy sets out a range of policies that may be implemented together regardless of the SPD. The Core Strategy has been subject to a separate and detailed SEA as part of its production.
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The SPD is likely to have no direct effects. Only minor positive indirect effects through ensuring that affordable housing is designed with sustainable construction considerations. These positive effects are likely to be long term.
The cumulative nature of the effects;	The SPD is likely to lead to minor cumulative positive effects through ensuring that new affordable houses are designed with sustainable

Criteria in Schedule 1 of 2004 Regulations	Potential effects of the SPD
	construction considerations. (The main sustainable benefit of affordable housing is a social sustainability).
The trans-boundary nature of the effects;	The SPD relates to Selby District. The location of Affordable housing schemes is not considered in the SPD. There will therefore be no transboundary effects.
The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	There is no link identified, other than a slight improvement in human health through better living conditions in suitable modern housing.
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The SPD will apply in Selby District where there is a population of around 83,500 persons. Applying the SPD in planning applications will have a smaller audience and affect only developers and Registered Social Landlords directly.
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to— (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use	The area affected is not known as it will be on a site-by-site basis at the time of planning applications. Those locations will be guided at the appropriate time by other policies such as the Core Strategy which sets policies for sustainable development and has been subject to SEA. The SPD will not deal with locations nor principle, only the mechanics of negotiation affordable housing on sites deemed appropriate under different policies. The SPD will not lead to the exceeding of environmental standards or limits. The SPD does not promote the intensive use of land and nor does it establish the principle of new buildings.
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The area affected is limited to Selby district which is not within or adjacent to any nationally protected landscapes. Effects on SPAs and SACs are considered in the HRA screening statement. The location of affordable housing will determined on a site-by-site basis at the time of planning applications. Those locations will be guided at the appropriate time by other policies such as the Core Strategy which sets policies for sustainable development and has been subject to SEA. The SPD will not deal with locations nor principle, only the mechanics of negotiation affordable housing on sites deemed appropriate under different policies. The SPD will not have any effects either by itself or in combination.