



# **Supplementary Planning Document: Cycle and Car Parking in New Development**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening  
Determination**

**Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Determination**

May 2023

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This SEA screening determination has been prepared by Hart District Council in its duty to determine whether the proposed **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Cycle and Car Parking in New Development** requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 1.2 Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is a procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
- 1.3 Screening explores potential cause-effect relationships between the plan or programme and the environmental baseline. Where it is determined that a plan or programme is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, an SEA process is required. Where it is determined that the plan or programme does not require SEA, a statement of reasons should be prepared and submitted alongside the plan.
- 1.4 The SEA screening process includes a five-week consultation with the SEA bodies: Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England (see Section 4).
- 1.5 This report also includes (at Appendix 2) a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening for likely significant effects on a European site (in Hart, the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area).
- 1.6 If the HRA screening establishes that an appropriate assessment is needed then an SEA is triggered.
- 1.7 The screening opinion dated April 2023 was based on Version 0.1 of the Draft SPD dated April 2023. Only very minor edits were made to the SPD before it was published for consultation on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2023, and so this determination remains valid.

## 2. The scope of the SPD

- 2.1 The Council is preparing an SPD that sets out its cycle and car parking standards for both residential and non-residential development. The SPD will provide guidance on the quantum, layout and design of cycle and car parking areas to ensure the issues related to over-and-under-provision of parking are avoided. The SPD also sets out the details of parking provision the Council require to determine a planning application submission.
- 2.2 The SPD will support Policies NBE9 Design and INF3 Transport in the [Hart Local Plan \(Strategies & Sites\) 2032](#). Both these policies refer to a need for an appropriate car and cycle parking provision for all users with regards to quantum, layout and design.

### **3. SEA Screening Assessment**

- 3.1 SPDs add further detail to policies in the development plan. They are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan. New policy cannot be introduced through SPD.
- 3.2 Generally, SPDs do not require SEA. However, SPDs may, in exceptional circumstances, require SEA if they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been assessed during the preparation of the relevant strategic policies. The Council is therefore required to undertake SEA screening to assess whether the SPD is likely to have significant environmental effects, and to consult the consultation bodies.
- 3.3 The SEA screening has been conducted by assessing the draft SPD against the criteria listed at Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations set out at Tables 1 and 2.
- 3.4 On the basis of the Screening process, including consultation with the statutory consultees, it has been determined that the Cycle and Car Parking in New Development SPD does not require a SEA under the SEA Directive and SEA Regulations. This is because:
- It is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects as it does not set new policy, nor does it result in additional development;
  - It provides guidance on the implementation of policies contained in the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 which have already been subject to Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment; and
  - The content of the SPD when taken as a whole and in combination with policies in the Hart Local Plan 2032 will not give rise to significant effects.
- 3.5 Appendix 2 sets out an HRA screening assessment which concludes that a full appropriate assessment is not required. This means that SEA is not triggered by a need to undertake an appropriate assessment.

### **4. Consultation with the SEA consultees**

- 4.1 The Council's Screening Opinion dated April 2023 (i.e. an earlier version of this document with identical analysis and conclusions) was sent to the statutory consultation bodies for SEA for their opinion. The SEA bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. They were consulted over a 5-week period from 5 April 2023 to 11 May 2023.
- 4.2 None of the bodies raised any objections to the conclusion that SEA is not required. Natural England and Historic England confirmed this in writing (see their responses at Appendix 3).

## Appendix 1: SEA screening

**Table 1: Characteristics of the SPD**

Criterion	Potential for significant effects?
<p>a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p> <p>The SPD is intended to help shape new developments in terms of an appropriate quantum of well-designed cycle and car parking provision. Some positive environmental impacts are sought when applying this guidance.</p> <p>No new development will arise as a result of this guidance and for the purposes of Strategic Environmental Assessment it is not considered that there will be any significant environmental effects.</p>
<p>b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p> <p>The SPD provides guidance on policies contained within the Hart Local Plan. It does not modify or influence the policies of the local plan. It sits beneath those policies in terms of a hierarchy.</p>
<p>c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p> <p>The SPD aims to contribute to sustainable development, good design and carbon reduction by designing in appropriate parking provision and encouraging use of cycles. The aim is that this will make a positive difference on individual developments. However, it is about refining the way parking is provided on developments that would happen anyway. The SPD will not increase the amount of new development and for the purposes of SEA it is not considered that there will be any significant environmental effects.</p>
<p>d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.</p>	<p><b>No</b></p> <p>The SPD should influence new development in a positive way with regards to parking provision and improving cycle storage, but it is about refining developments that happen anyway in a positive way. No significant environmental problems are foreseen as a result of this.</p>
<p>e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and</p>	<p><b>No</b></p> <p>The SPD will have limited impact on the implementation of European Community legislation.</p>

programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	
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**Table 2: Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Potential for significant effects?</b>
A) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	<b>No</b> The SPD will not in itself set out or bring forward development plans or projects. It will provide guidance on parking provision in new developments. The probability of any effect is therefore low. The effects are expected to be positive in nature.
b) The cumulative nature of the effects.	<b>No</b> The SPD is not anticipated to have any cumulative effects other than over time more developments complying to the new guidance on parking. The cumulative effects of the Hart Local Plan, which this SPD will support, were considered and addressed during the production of that document.
c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects.	<b>No</b> The effects of this SPD will be limited to Hart District.
d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	<b>No</b> The SPD, aimed at parking in new developments, will not result in any increase in risks to human health or the environment.
e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	<b>No</b> The SPD will only apply to developments in Hart District.
f) 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; iii) intensive land-use.	<b>No</b> The SPD does not itself direct or establish the principle of development. This is covered by policies NBE1 to NBE11 of the Hart Local Plan which has already been subject to a SA and HRA.
g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, community or international protection status.	<b>No</b>

	The SPD does not itself direct or establish the principle of development. It is limited to matters of parking provision on new developments.
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## Appendix 2: Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

A2.1 Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 it is necessary to consider whether the **Cycle and Car Parking in New Development SPD** is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

A2.2 Where the potential for likely significant effects cannot be excluded, the Council must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site, in view the site's conservation objectives.

A2.3 There are 4 distinct steps in the HRA process which should be followed in order. These are:

**Step 1: Screening** – identification of likely impacts on European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, and a consideration of whether the impact is significant.

The objective is to 'screen out' those plans and projects that can, without any detailed appraisal, be said to be unlikely to result in significant impacts upon European sites, usually because there is no mechanism for an interaction with European sites.

If significant effects are likely or cannot be screened out it is necessary to move on to the Appropriate Assessment at step 2.

**Step 2: Appropriate Assessment** – consideration of the impact on the integrity of European sites with regard to the site's structure, function and conservation objectives. Where effects are significant, mitigation measures should be considered. If step 2 cannot rule out significant effects with mitigation, then the process moved onto the consideration of alternative solutions at step 3.

**Step 3: Assessment of alternative solutions** – consideration of other methods of achieving the aims of the plan or project whilst avoiding impacts.

**Step 4: Assessment of Compensatory Measures** – If impact cannot be avoided, no alternative solutions exist and there is overriding public interest for implementing the plan or project, consideration should be given to compensatory measures.

### Step 1 – Screening

A2.4 The SPD supplements Policies NBE9 Design and INF3 Transport in the [Hart Local Plan \(Strategy and Sites\) 2032](#). Both these policies refer to a need for an appropriate car and cycle parking provision for all users in new development.

A2.5 The SPD clarifies the Council's cycle and car parking standards with regards to the required quantum, layout and design. The SPD does not introduce new policy or any site allocations. It will not result in any increase in development.

A2.6 The Hart Local Plan was subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment which considered any in-combination effects with other plans and projects and was prepared in consultation with Natural England. The Local Plan HRA considered the potential effects on the following European sites:

- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area sites
  - Bramshill SSSI
  - Hazeley Heath SSSI
  - Castle Bottom to Yateley and Hawley Commons SSSI
  - Bourley and Long Valley SSSI

A2.7 The following impact pathways were identified as being relevant to the Hart Local Plan HRA:

- Urbanisation and recreational pressure
- Atmospheric pollution

A2.8 The Hart Local Plan HRA undertook a test of likely significant effects for policies and allocations contained within the plan. Policies and allocations assessed as having no HRA implications or potential impact pathways linked to European sites were screened out from further consideration. In relation to relevant policies NBE9 and INF3, the Local Plan HRA findings are set out at Table 3.

**Table 3: Hart Local Plan 2032 – HRA likely significant effects test**

Policy	Policy description	Screening assessment
<b>NBE9 Design</b>	Requires developments to seek to achieve a high quality design and positively contribute to the appearance of the local area. This includes positively contributing to public spaces, reinforcing locally distinctive street patterns, incorporating any on-site or adjoining landscape features (such as trees and hedgerows), including areas for parking, and reducing energy consumption.	No HRA implications. This is a positive development management policy that seeks to achieve a high quality of design and contribute to public spaces, and incorporate landscape features such as trees and hedgerows. There are no impact pathways present.
<b>INF3 Transport</b> (identified as “Policy I3: Transport” in HRA)	Supports development proposals that offer flexibility in the choice of travel modes including walking and cycling, provide appropriate parking provision, provide waste and recycling storage areas, and protect and enhance access to public rights of way.	No HRA implications. This policy relates to transport which has potential to result in increased atmospheric pollution. However, this policy does not provide any new transport schemes or initiatives. It is a positive policy as it facilitates walking and cycling and encourages a ‘low

	<p>The preamble to the policy states: <i>'We will encourage infrastructure supporting the use of alternative vehicle types and fuels in support of a lower carbon future. Examples could include installation of electric vehicle charging points within developments.'</i></p>	<p>carbon future'. This policy provides for the requirement of Transport Statements or Transport Assessment for proposals that will generate significant traffic. This policy will not result in likely significant effects.</p> <p>This policy does not require measures to avoid adverse impact of air quality with relation to European designated sites. This policy does not ensure that no likely significant effect result.</p> <p>The provision of NBE5 (Biodiversity) provides for full protection of European designated sites, and the explicit need for assessment under the Habitats Regulations to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on the integrity of European designated sites where required. As such this policy can be screened out from further consideration.</p>
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A2.9 The SPD is providing supplementary guidance to support the implementation of Policies NBE9 Design and INF3 Transport which were screened out of having any likely significant effects. The SPD does not set the principle of development, nor does it direct development to a specific location. Therefore, as with the assessment of Policies NBE9 and INF3 during the Hart Local Plan HRA, there are no linking impact pathways present and there are no HRA implications. A full Appropriate Assessment is not required.

## Appendix 3: Comments received from the statutory consultation bodies



FAO: Planning Policy Team  
Hart District Council

Our ref: PL00792790

[planningpolicy@hart.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@hart.gov.uk)  
by email only

09 May 2023

Dear Planning Policy Team

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion: Cycle and Car Parking in New Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

Thank you for consulting Historic England about the above screening statement.

In terms of our area of interest, given the nature of the SPD, we concur with your assessment that the document is unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects and will simply provide additional guidance on existing policies within an adopted Development Plan Document which has already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal / SEA. So, we endorse the Council's conclusions that it is not necessary to undertake a SEA of this particular SPD.

The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

If you have any queries about this matter or would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Guy Robinson, BSc, MRTPI  
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Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.  
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Dear Sir/Madam,

Our Ref: 428557

**Draft Cycle and Car Parking in New Development SPD – SEA/HRA Screening Consultation**

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

**Natural England has no comments to make on the Draft Cycle and Car Parking in New Development SPD – SEA/HRA Screening Consultation**

The lack of comment from Natural England should not be interpreted as a statement that there are no impacts on the natural environment. Other bodies and individuals may wish to make comments that might help the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to fully take account of any environmental risks and opportunities relating to this document.

Should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment, then in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, please consult Natural England again.

Yours faithfully,

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