



Exeter City Council

Initial Screening Statement

On the determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plan and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC

for the proposed

South West Alphington Development Brief (SPD)

February 2014

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The *Environmental Assessment of Plan and Programmes Regulations 2004* explains how Local Planning Authorities should apply the *Strategic Environment Assessment Directive* (SEA) in respect of plans and programmes. In England, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is the process by which the Directive is applied to Local Plan documents. SA aims to promote sustainable development by ensuring that the Local Plan does not have significantly negative economic, environmental or social effects.
- 1.2 Local Plan documents, which for Exeter currently comprise the *Exeter Core Strategy* (adopted February 2012) and saved policies in the *Exeter Local Plan First Review* (adopted March 2005), have been subjected to SA. The *Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009* removes the automatic need for SA of SPDs.
- 1.3 However, the Office of Public Sector Information (2009) *Explanatory Memorandum to the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 No 401* confirms that SA will still be required if an SPD requires SEA. The note states that “LPAs will still need to screen their SPDs to ensure that the legal requirements of SA are met where there are impacts that have not been covered in the appraisal of the parent DPD or where an assessment is required by the SEA Directive.”
- 1.4 The SEA Directive requires SEA for plans which (i) determine the use of small areas at a local level, or (ii) are minor modifications to plans, **only** when these are determined to be likely to cause significant environmental effects.
- 1.5 The criteria for determining the significance of effects are taken from *Schedule 1* of the *Environmental Assessment of Plans and Regulations 2004*. They are set out in Appendix 1 of this document.

2 Purpose of the South West Alphington Development Brief

- 2.1 The purpose of the South West Alphington Development Brief (herein referred to as ‘the Brief’ is to amplify the development requirements set out in Policies CP17 and CP19 of the *Exeter Core Strategy* (adopted February 2012) for the strategy allocation at South West Alphington. The Development Brief also makes reference to a number of other adopted planning policy documents including the *Exeter Local Plan First Review*. The *Core Strategy* and all of the other adopted planning documents referred to in the Development Brief have already been subject to SEA/SA, or to an SEA Screening Opinion which has concluded that a full SEA/SA is not required.
- 2.2 Once adopted as a SPD, the Brief will not fall within either of the categories set out in paragraph 1.4 above. The use of the site has been determined by the *Core Strategy* and the contents of the Brief do not modify the *Core Strategy’s* contents. Application of the Brief will not change the sustainability and environmentally significant effects already identified through the SEA/SAs of the *Core Strategy* and other adopted planning policy documents named in the Brief.

3 The Screening Process

- 3.1 The Council must determine whether the plan or programme under assessment is likely to have significant environmental effects. This assessment must be made taking into account the criteria set out in *Schedule 1* of the *Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004* (see Appendix 1) and in consultation with the English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England.

3.2 Where the City Council determines that the plan or programme is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, and therefore does not need to be subject to full SEA, it must prepare a statement showing the reasons for this determination.

3.3 Appendix 1 shows the results of the screening process for the Brief.

4 Screening and Consultation Outcome

4.1 This screening demonstrates that the Brief is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment. Therefore it will not be necessary to carry out a full SEA/SA on this document.

4.2 Each of the statutory consultees has been consulted on this screening statement and their responses are summarised below:

Consultee	Response
English Heritage	Comments awaited
Environment Agency	Comments awaited
Natural England	Comments awaited

5 Appropriate Assessment

5.1 An *Appropriate Assessment* (AA) has been undertaken for the *Core Strategy*. Therefore an AA focussing specifically on the Brief is not warranted.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The South West Alphington Development Brief has not been subject to SEA/SA because it does not introduce new policies – it simply provides guidance on policies contained in the *Core Strategy* and other adopted planning documents named in the Brief, which have themselves been sufficiently appraised. The Council considers that the Brief will not result in any additional significant effects to those already identified through higher level SEA/SAs. It will provide more detailed guidance to developers to ensure that the positive effects identified in the *Core Strategy* SEA/SA are realised.

APPENDIX 1: Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects

Criteria ¹	Summary of significant effects
1. Characteristics of the SW Alphington Development Brief, having particular regard to:	
(a) 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 Brief will not set a new framework for projects and will not allocate new resources. It offers guidance to supplement Core Strategy Policies CP17 and CP19 and other adopted planning policy documents named in the Brief, including saved policies in the Exeter Local Plan
(b) the degree to which the SPD influences other plans and those in a hierarchy.	The Brief will be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Statement, the Core Strategy and other adopted planning policy documents named in the Brief, including saved policies in the Exeter Local Plan
(c) the relevance of the SPD for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The Brief will promote sustainable development by providing guidance on the implementation of Core Strategy Policy CP17 and CP19 and other adopted planning policy documents named in the Brief, including saved policies in the Exeter Local Plan. These documents have all been subjected to full sustainability appraisal or an SEA Screening Opinion which has determined that a full SA/SEA is not required.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the SPD.	The Brief will not introduce or exacerbate any environmental problems.
(e) the relevance of the SPD for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The Brief will not impact on the implementation of Community legislation on the environment.
2. Characteristics of the effects and area likely to be affected, having particular regard to:	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	The Brief will not have a significant environmental impact.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects of the SPD.	The Brief will not have a significant environmental impact.
(c) the trans boundary nature of the effects of the SPD.	The Brief will not have a significant environmental impact.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	The Brief will not have a significant environmental impact.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographic area and size of the population likely to be affected) by the SPD.	The Brief will not have a significant environmental impact.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by the SPD due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special natural characteristics or cultural 	The Brief will not have a significant environmental impact.

¹ Criteria taken from *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Regulations 2004, Schedule 1*. ODPM. 2004.

<p>heritage;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;• Intensive land use.	
<p>(g) the effects of the SPD on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>The Brief will not have a significant environmental impact.</p>