

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING STATEMENT FOR THE SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE PLANNING OBLIGATIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

**January 2016**

#### **Introduction**

1. This screening report is used to determine whether or not the S106 SPD requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. These require an SEA to be undertaken on any land use plan or programme 'which sets the framework for future development consent of projects'.
2. The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 167, advises that assessments should be proportionate, and should not repeat policy assessment that has already taken place.
3. The National Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014) states: "Supplementary planning documents do not require a sustainability appraisal but may in exceptional circumstances require a strategic environmental assessment if they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already have been assessed during the preparation of the Local Plan."
4. The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, adopted in December 2012, sets out the strategic policies for development in the district. This includes where development is considered acceptable and what mitigation measures should be included, at a broad level, to make development acceptable. The Core Strategy was subjected to Sustainability Appraisal during its production, and therefore the strategic principles of where development should take place, and what mitigation measures should be implemented, were appraised as part of this process.
5. To assess whether an SEA is required a screening process must be undertaken based on a standard set of criteria. This must be subject to consultation with English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England. The results of the screening process must be detailed in a Screening Statement, available to the public

#### **The draft Planning Obligations SPD**

6. The Draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the District Council's approach towards seeking planning obligations when considering planning applications. It identifies topic areas where planning obligations may be applicable depending on the scale of development, and the possible planning

contributions which would fall to be applicable to the different thresholds identified. These topics are:

<b>Planning obligations topic</b>	<b>SEA Directive topic equivalent</b>
Education	Material asset
Adult learning	Material asset
Transport	Material asset and climatic factors
Public Rights of Way	Material asset
Indoor & outdoor recreation and sport	Human health
Play areas	Human health
Open space/ amenity space	Human health
Green space and biodiversity	Biodiversity, fauna, flora,
Allotments	Human health
Community centres/halls	Material asset
Children's centre and nursery provision	Material asset
Integrated Youth support service	Material asset
Cemeteries	Material asset
Community safety	Human health
Recycling/waste	Soil, climatic factors
Health	Human health
Libraries	Material asset
Museum resource centre	Material asset
Public art/public realm	Material asset
Air quality	Air
Shop mobility	Material asset
Flood protection and water management	Water
Sustainable Drainage System	Water

## **The Screening Process**

7. The key to the screening decision is the determination of whether the Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, using the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations. These criteria are set out in the table in Appendix 2, alongside their relationship with the SPD.
8. The extract from 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' in Appendix 1 provides a flow diagram to demonstrate the SEA screening process. In most cases, the deciding factor of whether a plan requires SEA is set out in point 8 of this guidance:

*“Is [the plan] likely to have a significant effect on the environment?  
(article 3.5)”*

Annex II of the SEA Directive sets out criteria for determining the likely significant effects of a plan. These have been set out in Appendix 2 of this screening document and applied to the draft planning obligations document to assess the likelihood of its impacts on the environment.

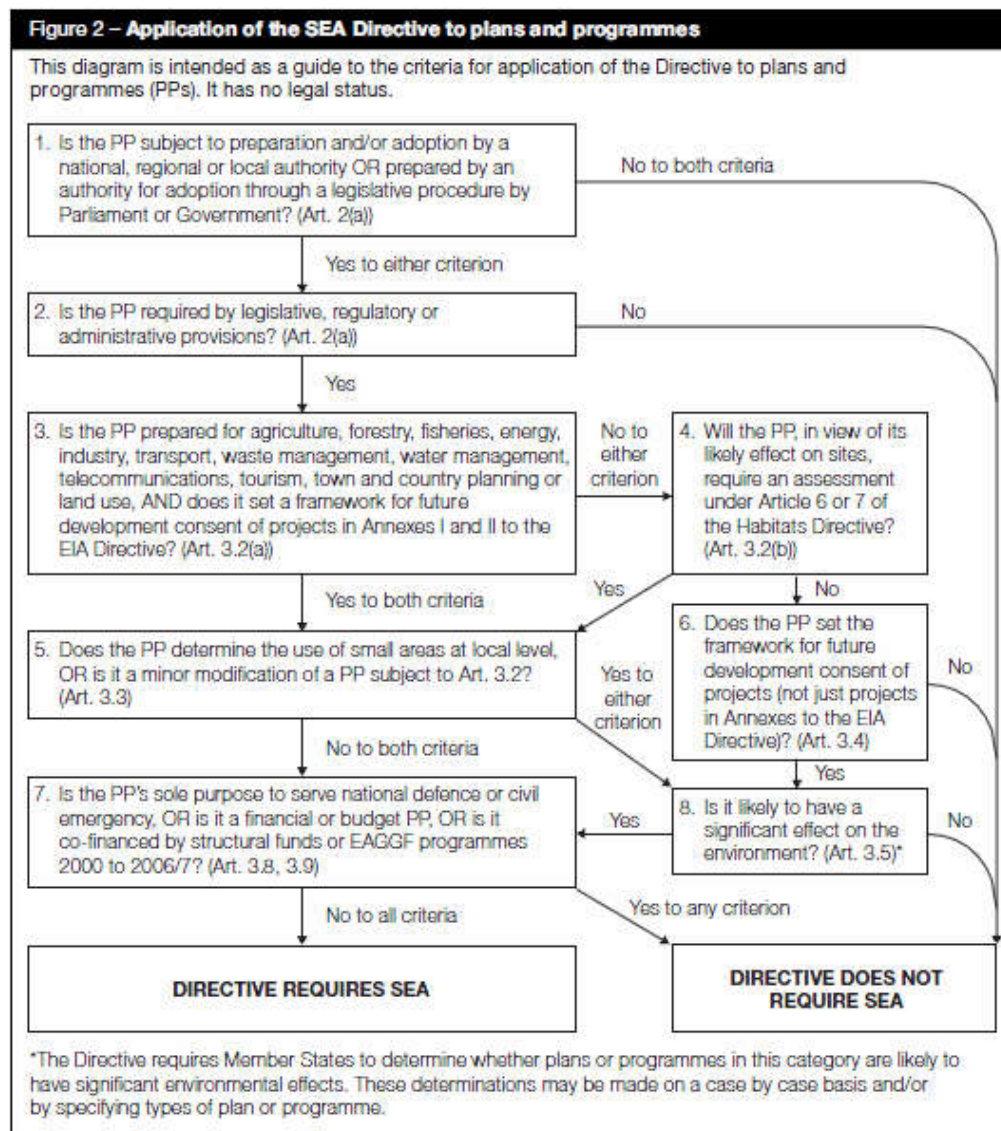
### **Statutory consultees**

9. This screening document was sent to English Heritage, Natural England, and the Environment Agency for comment during the consultation on the draft planning obligation document on 24 September 2015. English Heritage raised no objections and Historic England agreed that an SEA is not required.

### **Conclusion**

10. Although the SPD is likely to contain guidance that has an impact on the environment, it will be developed in general conformity with the Core Strategy which has been subject to a sustainability appraisal assessing the effects of its policies on the environment.
11. Any application following the guidance of the SPD will also be required to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment. This will assess the detailed, project specific impacts of the proposals that will not be captured through the strategic appraisal of policies undertaken for the Core Strategy.
12. Since the strategic policies of the Core Strategy have already been assessed through sustainability appraisal, and detailed project specific impacts will be assessed through Environmental Impact Assessment during planning application stage, an SEA of the planning obligations SPD would not add any value, and is therefore not required.

## Appendix 1: SEA screening guidance from “A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive”



## Appendix 2: Assessment of likely significant effects of the SPD

SEA criteria for determining significance	Application to the planning obligations SPD
<b>1) The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular to:</b>	
(a) The degree to which the SPD sets out a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size or operating conditions, or by allocating resources.	The SPD will become guidance for planning decisions to be made against; helping planning officers and developers to understand how potentially negative effects of schemes may be mitigated. The SPD does not allocate resources but does make suggestions of where financial resources should be directed to make schemes acceptable. However, the strategic principle of schemes has already been assessed in the core strategy, and detailed mitigation measures will be assessed through environmental impact assessments.
(b) The degree to which the SPD influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The SPD does not influence any other development plan documents but is used to help inform planning decisions. The SPD is in general conformity with the rest of the development plan.
(c) The relevance of the SPD for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The SPD will be essential in integrating environmental considerations into planning decisions. The guidance will be used to balance finite resources between environmental and social and economic mitigation measures. However, the strategic principle of schemes has already been assessed in the core strategy, and detailed mitigation measures will be assessed through environmental impact assessments.
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the SPD.	<p>There are a number of environmental problems in South Oxfordshire – in summary these are (non-exhaustive list taken from SA Scoping Report for Local Plan 2031):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A rapidly growing and ageing population with a high demand for new homes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around 35% of lower super output areas are within the top 20% nationally facing difficulties with accessing housing</li> <li>• Moderate to poor ecological status for most of our rivers</li> <li>• Medium and high levels of flood risk in 12 of our towns and larger villages</li> <li>• High levels of carbon dioxide emissions per capita</li> <li>• Nitrogen dioxide levels exceeding standards in our Air Quality Management Areas</li> <li>• Fluctuating farmland bird population</li> <li>• Little or no improvement in the area of Biodiversity Action Plan habitats</li> <li>• An increase in the number of listed buildings at risk of decay</li> <li>• A decline in the number of conservation areas with up to date character appraisals or management plans</li> <li>• Higher than regional average energy consumption</li> <li>• Failure to meet installed renewable energy capacity targets</li> <li>• High demands on water supply outstripping local supply</li> </ul> <p>A number of these issues would unlikely prevent a site from coming forward for development; but may require mitigation or compensatory measures on the site. S106 (or at a later date, CIL) agreements would be the correct tool to secure these measures. However, the strategic principle of schemes has already been assessed in the core strategy, and detailed mitigation measures will be assessed through environmental impact assessments.</p>
(e) The relevance of the SPD for the implementation of (European) Community legislation on the environment	<p>S106 funds may be used to help mitigate the effects of development on areas protected by EU legislation (for example Special areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive). It will also indirectly effect other Community legislation (for example through the provision of public transport funds which help to improve air quality). However, the strategic principle of schemes has already been assessed in the core strategy, and detailed mitigation measures will be assessed through environmental impact assessments.</p>

<b>2) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular to:</b>	
(a)The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	The mitigation measures implemented by S106 funding will likely be in place for the duration of the lifetime of the development. However, the strategic principle of schemes has already been assessed in the core strategy, and detailed mitigation measures will be assessed through environmental impact assessments.
(b)The cumulative nature of the effects of the SPD	S106 will be implemented on most development proposals and will therefore have a cumulative impact across the district. However, the strategic principle of schemes has already been assessed in the core strategy, and detailed mitigation measures will be assessed through environmental impact assessments.
(c)The trans-boundary nature of the effects of the SPD	This will have no impact on other European Union nations
(d)The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accident)	Mitigation measures have the potential for negative effects on the environment and human health – for example – a new perimeter road could potentially increase surface water run off and flooding, increase air pollution and human casualties, and also negatively effect nearby species and habitats. It is likely that such a scheme would be accompanied by additional mitigation measures (such as biodiversity offsetting, sustainable drainage schemes, and traffic calming), but the potential risk to human health and the environment is still present. However, the strategic principle of schemes has already been assessed in the core strategy, and detailed mitigation measures will be assessed through environmental impact assessments.
(e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects	South Oxfordshire District is around 270,000 hectares in size with a population of 134,000 people (as of the 2011 census). The planning obligations SPD will apply to most developments in this area.
(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, exceeded	The southern part of South Oxfordshire is covered by two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Chilterns and North Wessex Downs). There are a number of other environmental constraints such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Nature and Conservation Target Areas, Protected Species, and Ancient Woodland. Furthermore, the district is rich in historic and cultural heritage with listed buildings, conservation areas, and scheduled ancient monuments.

environmental quality standards or limit values, and intensive land use.	See point 1D.
(g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community, or international protection status.	See above