

Draft Design Guide Supplementary Planning
Document (SPD)

Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA)

Screening Determination Statement

December 2023

1. Strategic Environmental Assessment Introduction

- 1.1 This statement sets out Warrington Borough Council's determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with Regulation 9 (3) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC for the Draft Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) currently being prepared.

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment Context

- 2.1 The requirement for a SEA is set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which implements the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC.
- 2.2 The SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) identifies the purpose of SEA as "to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development".
- 2.3 The Responsible Authority (Warrington Borough Council) must determine whether the plan or program under assessment is likely to have significant environmental effects, taking account of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations. The Regulations require that the results of this process are set out in a Screening Determination Statement (this document), which must be publicly available.
- 2.4 Before the Responsible Authority makes a formal determination in relation to SEA, there is a requirement to consult the three statutory consultation bodies designated in the Regulations (the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England) on whether an environmental assessment is required.
- 2.5 The Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 11-008-20140306) states that:
- "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 been assessed during the preparation of the relevant strategic policies".

3. Draft Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines SPDs as documents, which add further detail to the policies in the Development Plan. As SPD's do not have the same status as policies contained within the Development Plan, they are not subject to independent examination.

- 3.2 The Council adopted its latest Design and Construction SPD in October 2010. The SPD sets out how the Council will seek to secure the many wider benefits of design in new developments across the Borough.
- 3.3 Since the initial adoption in 2010, several local key documents have come forward, including other new SPDs and the new Local Plan. National planning guidance and building regulations have also been updated, and Warrington has seen numerous developments, of differing scales and uses, come forward across the borough.
- 3.4 To address changes in statutory regulations, best practice guidance and Warrington's built environment, the Design and Construction SPD requires a thorough review and revision. It is proposed that the revised document will be prepared as "The Warrington Design Guide". This also reflects the changes to national policy highlighting the importance of good design, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021); the Design: Process and Tools National Planning Practice Guidance; the National Design Guide 2021, and the National Model Design Code 2021.
- 3.5 The aims of the updated Design Guide SPD are to:
- Set the benchmark for the quality of the built environment and public realm in upcoming developments across the borough.
 - Provide design principles for developments across the borough, based on quality design and sustainable growth principles.
 - Reflect the aspirations and requirements of the Local Plan and other SPDs.
 - Provide a strategy for the reviewing and updating of accompanying guidance documents, to ensure a consistent and clear suite of public information.

The proposed Warrington Design Guide SPD will:

- Serve as the primary point of reference for applicants, agents, design teams and planning professionals.
- Outline concise and robust guidance and design principles for developments across the borough.
- Direct design teams to relevant policy guidance and wider best practice documents.
- Ensure that developments demonstrate a holistic approach to the climate emergency.
- Include guidance for design teams to create thorough and robust design codes to accompany outline planning applications.
- Support the positive engagement of partners, developers, businesses, residents and other stakeholders.
- Consolidate existing and emerging design guidance currently contained in separate Council documents to ensure a holistic approach to Warrington's design requirements.

3.6 The Warrington Local Plan 2021/22-2038/39 is the “parent DPD”, which has already been subject to Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment, prior to its adoption on 04th December 2023.

3.7 The Draft Design Guide SPD will supplement the following Local Plan (2021/22-2038/39) Policies:

- DEV2 (Meeting Warrington’s Housing Needs)
- GB1 (Warrington’s Green Belt)
- TC1 (Town Centre and Surrounding Area)
- INF1 (Sustainable Travel and Transport);
- INF3 (Utilities, Telecommunications and Broadband);
- INF4 (Community Facilities);
- DC1 (Warrington’s Places)
- DC5 (Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Provision)
- DC6 (Quality of Place)
- ENV2 (Flood Risk and Water Management)
- ENV7 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development)
- ENV8 (Environmental and Amenity Protection)

3.8 The information and guidance in the SPD will be of particular use to developers, architects and agents looking to submit planning applications to Warrington Borough Council. It will provide practical advice to help applicants comply with Local Plan policy requirements. It also sets out the procedure for determining planning applications, what information will be required and when it will be required.

3.9 Importantly, it will assist local communities, Parish and Town Councils and Ward Councillors in responding to planning applications, ensuring that good design is considered and delivered in their areas.

4. Initial Screening Determination

4.1 The Draft Design Guide SPD is not setting new policy; it will supplement existing policies in the adopted Local Plan 2021/22–2038/39 (adopted by Full Council on 04th December 2023), which have already been subject to SA/SEA and HRA, through the Local Plan process. Initial Screening of the Draft Environmental Protection SPD was undertaken in September 2023, and led the Council to conclude that it is not likely that the SPD will result in any significant environmental impacts and, therefore, SEA is not required.

4.2 This Council’s initial Screening determination findings were then subject to consultation with the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England, as required by the Regulations. All three statutory consultees have raised no objections with the Council’s initial conclusions that the Draft SPD is unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects and will simply provide additional guidance on existing policies which have already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal.

4.3 The consultation responses received by the Council from the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England are contained in Appendix 2 of this statement.

5. Final Screening Determination

5.1 As part of the iterative screening process, taking into account the initial screening determination responses from the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England, and further assessment of the SPD as it progressed; the results of the Council's final screening process for the Draft SPD are set out in Appendix 1 of this statement.

Appendix 1: SEA Screening Assessment of the Draft Design Guide SPD

Schedule 1 Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment)

SEA Directive Criteria	Summary of Environments effects	Likely Significant Effects?
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1. Characteristics of the Draft Environmental Protection SPD having particular regard to:		
a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets out a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size or operating conditions or by allocating resources.	<p>The draft SPD will provide supplementary guidance to the adopted Warrington Local Plan 2021/22-2038/39 policies, which provides the overarching framework for development in Warrington. These policies have been scrutinised through the Sustainability Appraisal processes.</p> <p>The Draft Design Guide SPD will not set a new framework for projects or other activities and does not introduce new policies.</p> <p>The SPD will not itself allocate resources, although it will help secure the delivery of the Local Plan and good design.</p>	No
b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	<p>The SPD is at the lower tier of the Development Plan hierarchy. The purpose of the SPD is to support the delivery of policies in the adopted Warrington 2021/22-2038/39 and to guide the preparation and determination of planning applications.</p> <p>Therefore, the SPD will not influence other plans or programmes as it forms a lower tier of the existing planning hierarchy, and consequently will not be likely to cause any significant environmental effects.</p>	No
c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular	<p>The aim of the SPD is to assist mitigating the impacts from development on the built and natural environment. As such, it aligns with the promotion of sustainable development but it is the Local Plan, which</p>	No

with a view to promoting sustainable development.	provides the policy basis for promoting sustainable development.	
d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	The Local Plan SEA and HRA both identified environmental constraints within the Borough and assessed the policies of the Local Plan in this regard. The SPD will not introduce or exacerbate any environmental problems but is a mechanism for ensuring that any environmental problems that may arise from the Local Plan can be mitigated.	No
e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes related to waste management or water).	The SPD will help support the implementation of other plans and programmes related to legislation on the environment through supporting the delivery of the Local Plan 2021/22-2038/39 policies. However, it is the Local Plan that provides the policy framework in this regard.	No

2. Characteristics of the effects and area likely to be affected having particular regard to:		Likely Significant Effect?
a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	The SEA of the Local Plan identified potential effects and the basis for required mitigation. The SPD is a mechanism to ensure that mitigation is delivered.	No
b) The cumulative nature of the effects	The SEA of the Local Plan identified potential cumulative impacts and their effects, together with the basis for required mitigation. The SPD is a mechanism to ensure that mitigation is delivered.	No
c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects	The application of the SPD will be limited to providing additional guidance regarding implementing the design elements required by policies in the adopted Warrington Local Plan 2021/22-2038/39, which has already been through the SA/SEA process.	No

	The SPD does not, in itself, influence the location of development. Therefore, the effects of the SPD will not result in any significant environmental effects of a trans-boundary nature.	
d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accident)	<p>It is not envisaged that there will be any risks to human health or the environment arising from the implementation of this SPD.</p> <p>It is only adding detail to existing policies in the adopted Warrington Local Plan 2021/22-2038/39, which has already been through the SEA process.</p>	No
e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographic area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The SPD is applicable Borough wide, but does not allocate land, prescribe land uses or identify sites for development that have not already been considered within the adopted Warrington Local Plan 2021/22-2038/39, which has already been through the SA/SEA process.	No
<p>f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</p> <p>ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</p> <p>iii) Intensive land use</p>	<p>There are policies in the adopted Warrington Local Plan 2021/22-2038/39 already assessed through the SA/SEA process that seek to protect these areas/address these impacts.</p> <p>The SPD, in itself, does not influence the location of development and hence will not lead to significant effects on the value or vulnerability of the area.</p> <p>Any planning applications for development will be required to satisfy the relevant policies for protection of the character of the area, as set out in Warrington Local Plan 2021/22–2038/39, before permission is granted.</p>	No
g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, Community or international protected status	<p>The SPD does not influence the location of development, so will not cause effects on protected landscape sites.</p> <p>The effects on areas or landscapes, which have recognised national, community or international protected status have already been assessed and addressed</p>	No

	<p>through SEA as part of the Local Plan process.</p> <p>Any planning applications for development will be required to satisfy the relevant policies for protection of the character of the area, as set out in Warrington Local Plan 2021/22–2038/39, before permission is granted.</p>	
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**Appendix 2: Initial Screening Determination responses from the Environment Agency,
Historic England, and Natural England**

From: [Blythin, India](#)
To: [Usher, Kevin](#)
Subject: RE: WBC Design Guide SPD – SA/SEA Scoping Consultation
Date: 04 October 2023 15:10:06

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Dear Kevin,

Thank you for consulting us on the Draft Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Initial Screening Determination Statement.

We can confirm that we agree with the conclusions it makes and we look forward to receiving the full draft of the document at a later date.

Yours sincerely,

India Blythin

Pronouns: she/her

Planning Advisor | Sustainable Places | Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire

Environment Agency | Richard Fairclough House, Knutsford Road, Latchford, Warrington WA4 1HT

Email: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

From: Usher, Kevin <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 15 September 2023 10:29
To: Hewitt, Dawn <[REDACTED]>
Subject: WBC Design Guide SPD – SA/SEA Scoping Consultation

Dear Sir/madam,

The Council are currently preparing an update to our existing [Design & Construction Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#) (now referred to as the Design Guide SPD).

The purpose of the Design Guide SPD is to supplement a range of polices in the new Warrington Local Plan (2021/22 to 2038/39) and will be used to inform Development Management decisions. It will set out the Council's approach when considering planning applications for a range of development types across the borough. The objective of the document is to help applicants through the planning process when applying for development by providing clarification on how new/existing policies of relevance will be applied and should be interpreted.

Please find attached a copy of the Draft Screening Statement that includes a copy of the Draft structure of the SPD.

Having undertaken the screening based on Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the Council has concluded that it is not likely that the SPD will have any significant environmental impacts and therefore a SA/SEA is not required.

I would be grateful if you could confirm, by **20th October 2023** that your organisation agree with



Historic England

FAO: [REDACTED]

Our ref: PL00794046,4047,4049

Your ref:

Date: 17 October 2023

Dear Planning Team

Warrington Screening Statements (Design Guide – PL00794046, Environmental Protection SPD – 4047 and Planning Obligations 4049)

Thank you for your email dated 15 September regarding the proposed SPD screening statements.

Historic England is the Government's statutory adviser on all matters relating to the historic environment in England. We are a non-departmental public body established under the National Heritage Act 1983 and sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). We champion and protect England's historic places, providing expert advice to local planning authorities, developers, owners and communities to help ensure our historic environment is properly understood, enjoyed and cared for.

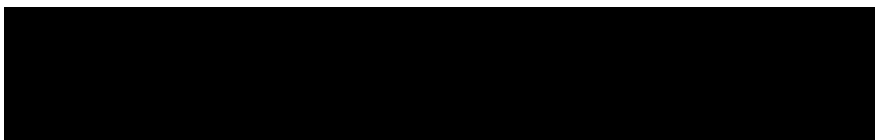
Historic England has produced a document, which you might find helpful in providing guidance on the effective assessment of the historic environment in Strategic Environmental Assessments. This can be found at <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>.

In terms of our area of interest, we would 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 which have already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. As a result, we would endorse the conclusions that it is not necessary to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the document.

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

Yours sincerely,

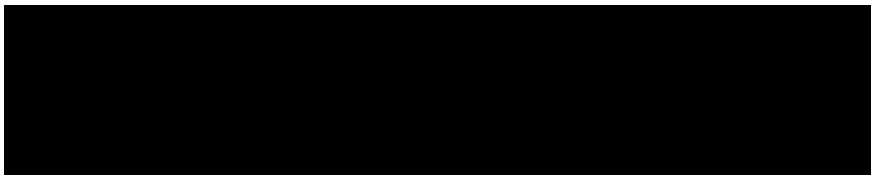
Emily Hrycan
Historic Environment Planning Adviser (North West)



Historic England

Telephone: [REDACTED]

e-mail: [REDACTED]



From: [SM-NE-Consultations \(NE\)](#)
To: [Usher, Kevin](#)
Subject: WBC Design Guide SPD – SA/SEA Scoping Consultation Response
Date: 17 October 2023 09:59:04
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[DRAFT Design Guide SPD - SEA Screening Statement.docx](#)

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Our Ref: 450061

Warrington Borough Council - Design Guide SPD – SA/SEA Scoping 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 Design Guide SPD – SA/SEA Scoping 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,

Dominic Rogers
Consultations Team
Natural England

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Enquiries line: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

www.gov.uk/natural-england

[REDACTED]

From: Usher, Kevin <[REDACTED]>

Sent: 15 September 2023 10:14