

Ipswich Borough Council Draft Cycling Strategy Supplementary Planning Document

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report (under Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004)

November 2015

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Ipswich Borough Council is preparing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to help inform the provision of infrastructure to support cycling in the Borough. The preparation of the SPD is a response to both national and local planning policy.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework March 2012 (NPPF) recognises the importance of sustainable transport and states that 'The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel' (paragraph 29) and 'Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion' (paragraph 30).
- 1.3 The Council's adopted Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document December 2011 (the 'Core Strategy') contains a number of policies which seek to encourage cycling. Policy CS5 sets the overall approach to improving accessibility by requiring that development be located where it can be accessed safely and conveniently by cycle and will prioritise the introduction of an integrated cycle network. Policy DM16 requires high quality, secure cycle storage. Policy DM17 states that development proposals will be assessed in terms of cycle accessibility to and within the site and states that the Council will require dedicated cycle routes where appropriate. Policy DM19 states that minimum cycle parking standards must be met and that this should be high quality and secure, and that cycle parking will be required in any new car parks in the town.
- 1.4 The Council is also currently producing a Site Allocations and Policies (Incorporating IP-One Area Action Plan) development plan document which will set out specific cycle improvements relating to some site allocations.
- 1.5 Thus the SPD does not create new policy but provides detail in respect of the implementation of policies identified above which aim to ensure opportunities for cycling are provided as part of new development. The primary purpose of the SPD is to provide detailed guidance for anyone developing a site where cycle provision is required, and it will also act as a basis for identifying off-site enhancements to the wider network either through the planning process or through other mechanisms, to support the wider aims of the Core Strategy in this respect as set out under Policy CS5.

2. Legislative Background

- 2.1 This screening report is designed to test whether or not the Cycling Strategy SPD requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Following amendments to the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act via the 2008 Planning Act¹, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is no longer required for Supplementary Planning Documents. However the adopted policies to which the Supplementary Planning Document relates have been subject to both SA and SEA as part of their production.

¹ Part 9, Chapter 2, paragraph 180 of the 2008 Planning Act amended section 19, subsection 5 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act

- 2.2 The requirement for SEA is established through the European Directive 2001/42/EC on 'the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.' It is known as the 'SEA Directive'. The SEA Directive was transposed into English law by the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or the 'SEA Regulations'. Detailed guidance on these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' published in September 2005.
- 2.3 The requirement to undertake SEA applies to plans and programmes which are subject to preparation or adoption by an authority at a national, regional or local level. In order to establish whether SEA is required the fundamental consideration is whether the document is likely to have 'significant environmental effects'. The best way to determine this is to carry out a screening assessment. If the screening assessment indicates that there could be significant effects, an SEA is needed. Therefore this report focuses on screening for SEA and the criteria for establishing whether a full assessment is needed.
- 2.4 A separate statement has been produced which assesses the need for assessment under the Habitats Regulations.

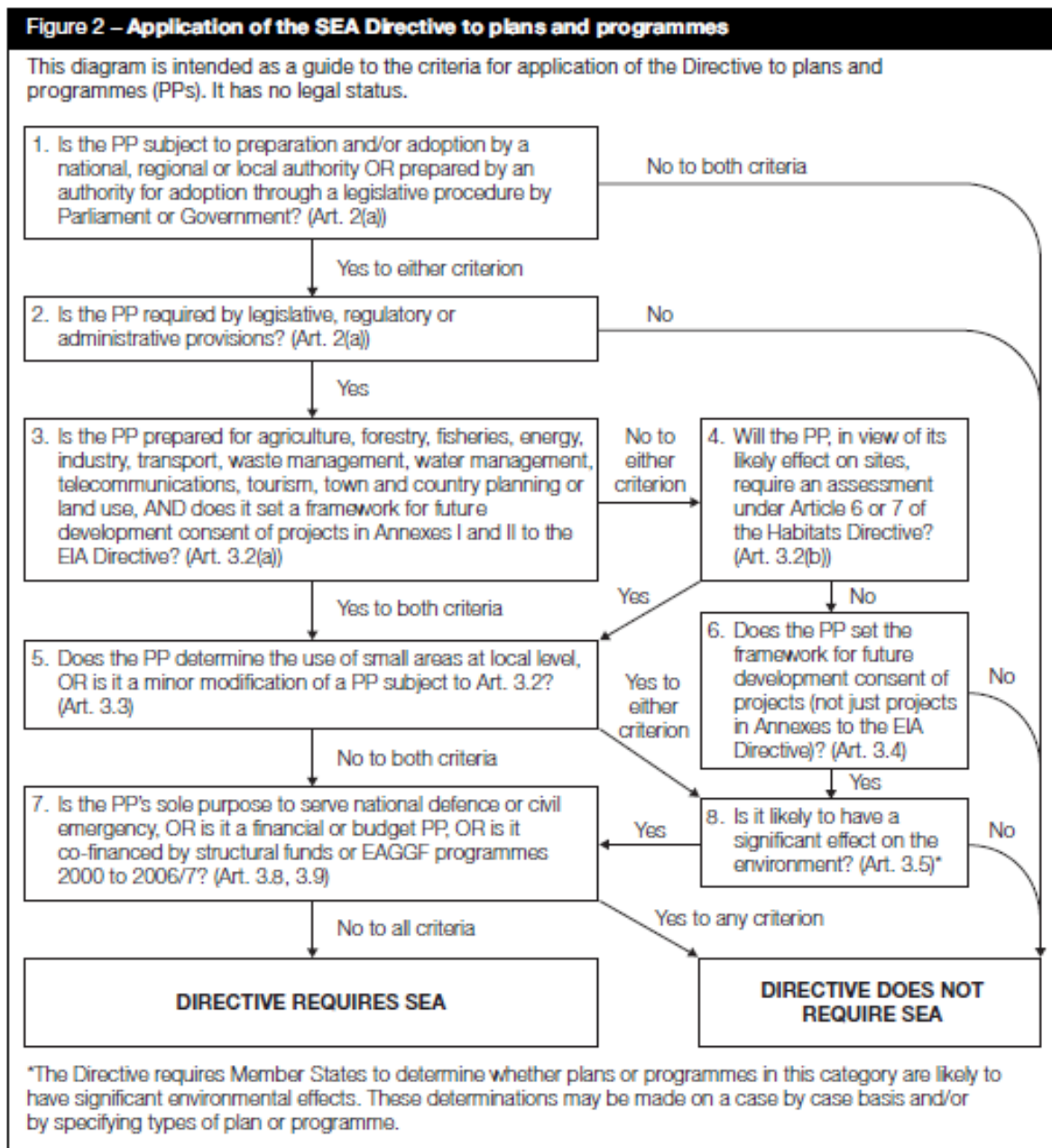
3. Criteria for assessing the effects of Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.1 Criteria for determining the likely significant effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC² are set out below:
- (a) the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
 - (b) the degree to which the plan influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
 - (c) the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
 - (d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;
 - (e) the relevance of the plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans linked to waste management or water protection).
- 3.2 Also to be considered are the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:
- (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
 - (b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
 - (c) the transboundary nature of the effects;
 - (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);
 - (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
 - (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; or
 - (iii) intensive land-use and
 - (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

² Annex II of the SEA Directive

4. Assessment

4.1 The following diagram illustrates the process for screening a planning document to ascertain whether a full SEA is needed, based upon the considerations set out in sections 2 and 3 above.



Source: A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, ODPM, 2005

4.2 The questions from the diagram above, which illustrates how the SEA Directive should be applied, have been put in Table 1 below together with the screening assessment for the draft Ipswich Cycling Strategy SPD.

Table 1: Screening of the draft Ipswich Cycling Strategy SPD

SEA Screening Questions	Screening assessment of the draft Ipswich Cycling Strategy SPD
1. Is the plan or programme subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government (Art. 2(a))?	<p>Yes – the SPD is prepared and adopted by a local planning authority, Ipswich Borough Council.</p> <p>(Yes to either criterion, go to question 2)</p>
2. Is the plan or programme required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions (Art. 2(a))?	<p>Yes – the SPD is produced as part of the delivery of the statutory Development Plan and the process for preparing SPDs is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012</p> <p>(Yes – go to question 3)</p>
3. Is the plan or programme prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set the framework for future development consent for projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive (Art 3.2(a))?	<p>Yes – it is an SPD prepared for town and country planning and land use however it relates only to provision for cycling within new development and enhancements for cycling to the wider network, to support existing planning policies, and therefore is unlikely in itself to set a framework for future development consent for projects listed in Schedule II of the EIA Directive.</p> <p>(No to either criterion, go to question 4)</p>
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive?	<p>No – see separate assessment</p> <p>(Yes – go to question 6)</p>
5. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)?	<p>Yes – the SPD will be a material consideration in the consideration of planning applications in Ipswich.</p> <p>(Yes – go to question 8)</p>
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment (Art. 3.5)?	<p>No.</p> <p>The purpose of the SPD is to provide guidance to assist in the interpretation of adopted policies in the Core Strategy and Policies DPD. The policies to which the SPD relates were themselves subject to SEA (incorporated within the SA) through the Core Strategy preparation process. The SPD will not influence the principle of requiring provision for cycling but will guide the details of this.</p> <p>Therefore the SPD will not itself have any significant effects on the environment. The production of the SPD may assist in</p>

	<p>addressing some potential negative / uncertain effects identified through the SA process in relation to traffic and air quality, as well as reinforcing the positive effects of those policies which seek to promote sustainable transport.</p> <p>In coming to this view, due regard has been had to Annex II of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC). The considerations of Annex II (2)³ were fully examined as part of the SA report for the adopted Core Strategy and Policies DPD (see Appendix 1).</p> <p>(No - Directive does not require SEA).</p>
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4.3 Based on the assessment contained in the table above, it is expected that the SPD will have no significant environmental effects. The effect of the SPD will be to ensure that cycling provision is incorporated in an appropriate way in new development to facilitate cycling provision.

5. Conclusion

5.1 SEA is not required in relation to the production of the Ipswich Cycling Strategy SPD.

5.2 In accordance with Regulation 9(2) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 the three statutory consultees, the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, have been consulted on the Screening Assessment. Natural England agree that an SEA is not required. Historic England also agree that an SEA is not required although requested that further information be included in relation to effects on historic assets. Further reference to potential effects on historic assets has therefore been included within the assessment in Appendix 1. No response was received from the Environment Agency.

5.3 This conclusion represents the Council's determination under Regulation 9(1) of the 2004 Regulations.

Date of determination -11th November 2015

³ See paragraph 3.2 above

Appendix 1: Consideration of the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected (see 3.1, 3.2 and question 8 in Table 1 above)

<p>- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,</p>	<p>The purpose of the SPD is to provide guidance to assist in the interpretation of adopted Core Strategy Policies (which have been subject to SEA). The SPD is predicted to reinforce the positive effects identified through the SA of the Core Strategy and Development Policies and also address potential negative effects that were identified including the potential for new development to have a negative effect on traffic and, as a result, air quality. These additional positive effects would not amount to a significant effect in SEA terms. The SPD will also provide guidance on ensuring that new cycling infrastructure is visually appropriate.</p>
<p>- the cumulative nature of the effects,</p>	<p>As the SPD is expected to lead to better provision for cycling there are likely to be cumulative positive effects over time.</p>
<p>- the transboundary nature of the effects,</p>	<p>There may be transboundary effects if improved cycling infrastructure in Ipswich leads to increased cycling to and from the Borough, however these are considered to be positive and are not considered to be significant in SEA terms.</p>
<p>- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),</p>	<p>There would be no risks to human health or the environment. Improving provision for cycling is likely to have a positive effect on health overall.</p>
<p>- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),</p>	<p>Whilst any effects are likely to be positive, as outlined above, the magnitude and extent of direct effects is likely to be localised to Ipswich, with potential for indirect positive effects beyond the Borough.</p>
<p>- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, - intensive land-use, 	<p>Part of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Special Protection Area, Ramsar and SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are within Ipswich Borough in addition to a further two SSSIs. Ipswich has 15 conservation Areas and 603 Listed Buildings and is an area of archaeological importance with remains of all periods in the historic core. Where cycling infrastructure is to be provided, the policies of the Core Strategy and Policies development plan document which relate to protecting such assets would apply. The SPD would not influence the principle of development which would be established through adopted policies which</p>

	<p>have been subject to SEA. Nevertheless the SPD contains reference to ensuring that cycling infrastructure should protect and enhance the character of its surroundings, particularly historic assets, which is a positive effect.</p>
<p>- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>Part of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries Special Protection Area, Ramsar and SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are within Ipswich Borough in addition to a further two SSSIs. The SPD would not influence the principle of development which would be established through adopted policies which have been subject to SEA.</p>