

Ipswich Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement

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

Introduction

Ipswich's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how we will involve local people, local businesses and other key organisations and stakeholders when we prepare our planning policies and consider planning applications. All local planning authorities are required under section 18 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to prepare and maintain a Statement of Community Involvement.

What is the purpose of this statement?

The purpose of this statement is to assess the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in relation to the Statement of Community Involvement.

The Statement of Community Involvement does not create new policy but sets out how we will involve local people, local businesses and other key organisations and stakeholders when we prepare our planning policies and consider planning applications.

What is the legislative background?

This screening report is designed to test whether or not the Statement of Community Involvement requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

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 Environmental 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.

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.

A separate statement has been produced which assesses the need for assessment under the Habitats Regulations.

What are the criteria for assessing the effects?

Criteria for determining the likely significant effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC¹ 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;

¹ As set out in Annex II of the Directive

- (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; and
- (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).

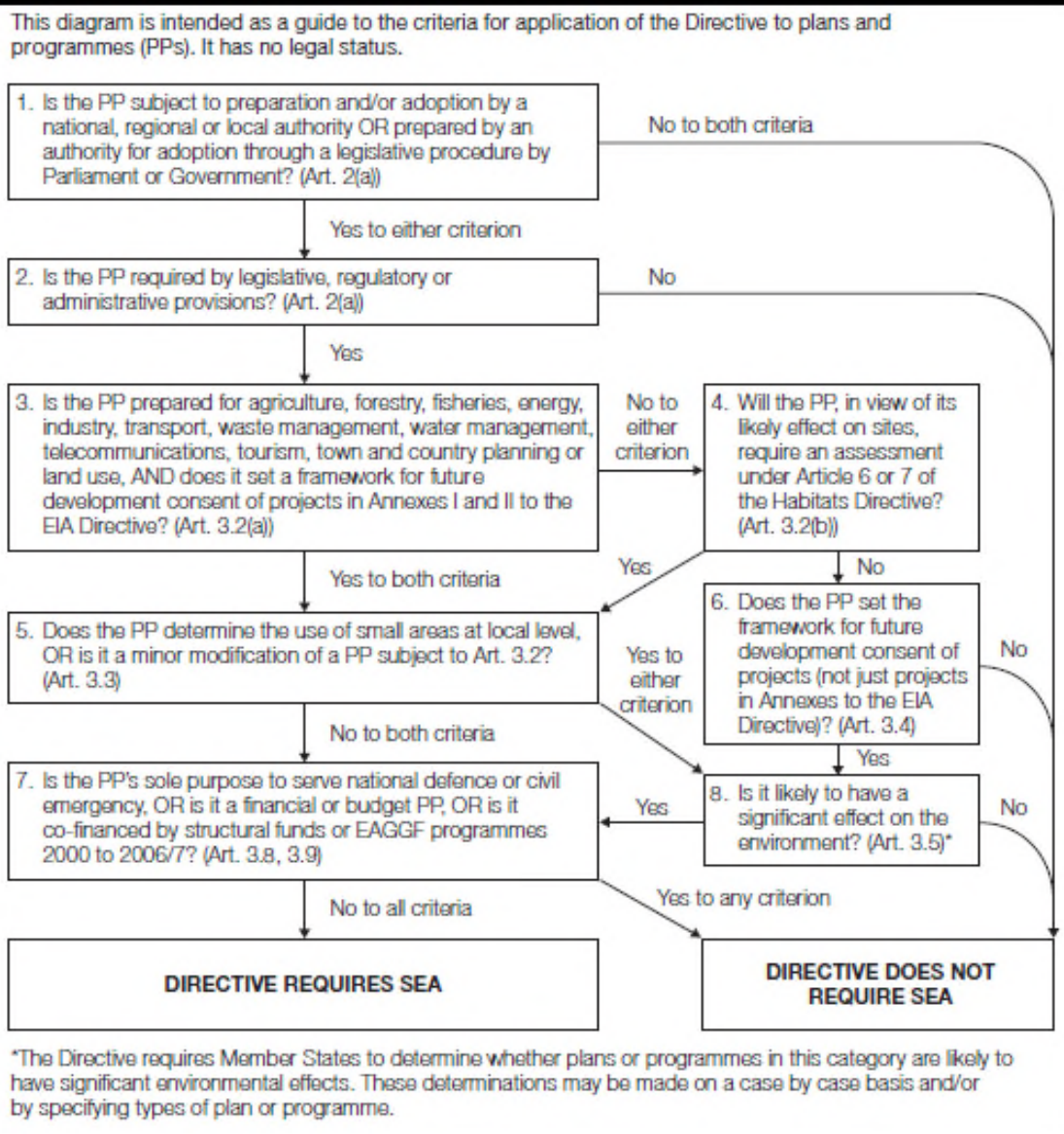
Also to be considered are the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

- (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.

How is the document assessed?

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

Figure 2 – Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes



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

The questions from the diagram above, which illustrates how the SEA Directive should be applied, have been put into Figure 3 below together with the screening assessment for the Statement of Community Involvement.

Figure 3: Screening of the Statement of Community Involvement

SEA Screening Questions	Screening assessment of the Statement of Community Involvement
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))?	Yes – the Statement of Community Involvement is prepared and adopted by a local planning authority, Ipswich Borough Council. (Yes to either criterion, go to question 2)
2. Is the plan or programme required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions (Art. 2(a))?	Yes – all local planning authorities are required under section 18 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to prepare and maintain a Statement of Community Involvement. (Yes – go to question 3)
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))?	Yes – the Statement of Community Involvement is prepared for town and country planning and land use. It provides detail to support the implementation of the policy framework set out in the adopted Ipswich Local Plan 2017 for the future consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II of the EIA Directive (which includes for example ‘urban development projects’). (Yes to both criteria, go to question 5)
5. Does the plan or programme determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a plan or programme subject to Ar. 3.2 (Art. 3.3)?	No – the Statement of Community Involvement does not determine the use of small areas at a local level and is not a minor modification of a plan or programme subject to Ar. 3.2 (Art. 3.3). (Yes to either criterion, go to question 7)
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it a financial budget PP, or is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7 (Art. 3.8, 3.9)?	No. The purpose of the Statement of Community Involvement is to set out how Ipswich Borough Council will involve local people, local businesses and other key organisations and stakeholders when we prepare our planning policies and consider planning applications. (No - Directive does not require SEA).

Based on the assessment contained in the table above, it is expected that the Statement of Community Involvement itself will have no significant environmental effects. The effect of the Statement of Community Involvement will be to ensure that the Council will meet its duty to comply with planning legislation.

Conclusion

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 (formerly English Heritage) and Natural England, have been consulted on the Screening Assessment to seek their agreement that a SEA is not required.

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

Date of determination: 10 November 2023