



**Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Design and Sustainability  
Supplementary Planning Document**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening and Habitats Regulations Assessment**

**13 November 2017**

**Executive Summary**

This report details the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment and/or a full Habitats Regulations Assessment to be produced to accompany the Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document.

Subject to the views of the three statutory consultees (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England), it concludes that an Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required, and that the SPD would not need to be subject to full Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations.

**Introduction**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to determine whether the Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (the 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; and
  - An assessment against the Habitats Regulations to establish whether there would be any significant effects on European site(s).

**Purpose and content of the Design and Sustainability SPD**

- 2 The purpose of the Design and Sustainability SPD is to provide more detailed guidance regarding the implementation of the policies relating to design and sustainability in the adopted Local Plan (in particular, Policy EM10 – Delivering High Quality Development – policy set out in appendix 1 of this document). It updates and enhances the Council's current Design and Sustainability SPD (and appendices). The geographic area covered by the SPD is the borough of Basingstoke and Deane (see appendix 2).
- 3 The document recognises the strong linkages between good design and sustainability and covers the following topics:
  - contextual survey and analysis (the process by which the context must inform the whole design process, including issues such as landscape and biodiversity);

- spatial structure (mainly focusing on grids and blocks and how this influences street patterns and the character of places);
- formation and expression of structure (issues such as shaping the arrangement of built form and the creation of a network of streets);
- movement and walkability (stressing the importance of creating a positive environment for walking and cycling);
- urban design principles for the arrangement of buildings and creating successful spaces;
- design considerations in relation to vehicle parking and cycle storage
- guidance for ensuring the high quality design of new buildings;
- sustainable design approaches in relation to built form (including micro-renewables, water usage, SuDS and green roofs);
- specific guidance in relation to certain types of buildings – including tall buildings, housing and commercial development;
- materials and detailing (in relation to the external appearance);
- residential amenity; and
- extensions to existing buildings (mainly focused on housing).

### SEA screening

- 4 The adopted Local Plan (2011-2029), and the policies that provide the framework for the SPD, was the subject of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (incorporating SEA). The Local Plan can be found on the council website at: <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/planningpolicy> and the SA (inc. SEA) can be viewed here: <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/952.pdf>
- 5 With regard to the need for SA (inc.SEA) for SPDs, the National Planning Policy Guidance (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 have been assessed during the preparation of the Local Plan.

‘A strategic environmental assessment is unlikely to be required where a supplementary planning document deals only with a small area at a local level (see regulation 5(6) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004), unless it is considered that there are likely to be significant environmental effects.

‘Before deciding whether significant environment effects are likely, the local planning authority should take into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and consult the consultation bodies’.

- 6 The following table therefore assesses the proposed SPD in relation to Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations to determine whether it would have a significant effect on the environment.

<b>Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects of the environment</b>	<b>Potential effects of the SPD</b>	<b>Is there a likely significant effect?</b>
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:		
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	<p>The SPD will provide guidance on how to deliver high quality and well-designed development in line with the design and sustainability policies in the Local Plan.</p> <p>The adopted Local Plan was prepared with continuous, iterative input from the SA (inc. SEA). The Local Plan was considered sound by an independent Inspector.</p>	No
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The SPD sits in a hierarchy of documents. It does not directly affect any other plans or programmes but is influenced by the adopted Local Plan and other higher tier planning policy documents including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).	No
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	<p>The adopted Local Plan and other higher level policies set the context for achieving sustainable development in the borough.</p> <p>Options considered through the development of the SPD will not change the higher level policy requirements which have, in themselves, been subject to SA (inc. SEA).</p> <p>Given the broad scope of the SPD, it will assist with meeting almost all of the SA (inc. SEA) objectives, but will have a particular positive impact upon objectives:</p>	No

	<p>3. To reduce and minimise emissions of greenhouse gases and manage the impact of climate change; 15. To protect and enhance the distinctiveness of the local built environment; 16. To improve the efficiency of resource use, including reusing previously developed land, existing buildings and materials, and encouraging the maximum use of sustainable design and construction technologies and, 17. To create and sustain vibrant settlements and communities.</p>	
<p>(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and</p>	<p>The Local Plan SA (inc. SEA) identified that policy EM10 will have positive impacts against a number of SA objectives.</p> <p>This included objectives 3 (climate change), 15 (built environment), 16 (resource use and design) and 17 (settlement and communities).</p> <p>The SPD will provide further guidance and reinforce relevant parts of the policies.</p>	No
<p>(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</p>	<p>It is unlikely that there would be any significant environmental effects resulting from the guidance in the SPD. The SPD includes guidance about water usage and SuDS to support the implementation of the policies (EM7 and EM9) in the Local Plan.</p>	No
<p>Characteristics of the effects likely having regard, in particular, to:</p>		
<p>(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;</p>	<p>The SPD includes guidance to support the policies in the Local Plan.</p> <p>The evidence to support the SA (inc. SEA) for the Local Plan continues to be up-to-date and considered the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects.</p>	No

(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	There are no likely cumulative effects that would result from the production of the SPD.	No
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	There will be no transboundary effects (in relation to other EU member states).	No
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);	There are unlikely to be any risks to human health.	No
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The spatial extent of policies EM7, EM9 and EM10 of the Local Plan is the borough boundary (see appendix 2). The spatial extent of the SPD will be the borough boundary.	No
(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	The value and vulnerability of the area covered by the Housing SPD has been considered as part of the SA (inc. SEA) of the Local Plan.  The SPD will provide further guidance and reinforce relevant parts of the policies.	No
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The SPD includes specific advice about development in rural areas, which would help to ensure the high quality of development within or close to the North Wessex Downs AONB.	No

### SEA conclusion

- 7 The design and sustainability policies to which this SPD relates were adopted through the Local Plan (2011-2029) and, as such, have been subject to detailed and iterative SA (inc.SEA) as part of the Local Plan process. The conclusion of the screening process is that as the draft Design and Sustainability SPD does not introduce new planning policy and does not propose any new areas of land use, it will not give rise to significant environmental effects. A Strategic Environmental Assessment is therefore not required.

### Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening

- 8 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening report was undertaken for the adopted Local Plan (2011-2029). The documents can be found on the borough council's website here:

- <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/384.pdf> (HRA April 2014)
- <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/955.pdf> (HRA Addendum May 2015)

- <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/1420.pdf> (HRA addendum December 2015)
- 9 In relation to policy EM10, the HRA for the Local Plan (2011-2029) concluded the following:
- Policy EM10 - screened out as there is no likely significant effect arising on European sites.
- 10 The HRA for the Local Plan (2011-2029) concluded that there were no likely significant effects arising on European sites, either alone, or in combination with other plans and projects as a result of the Local Plan (2011-2029). The Local Plan (2011-2029) contains an adequate policy framework to avoid or adequately mitigate effects on European sites. The Local Plan (2011-2029) did not therefore require full Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations.
- 11 Given the SPD does not introduce new planning policy, the SPD, alone or in combination with other plans and programmes, is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site. Therefore a full Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations is not required.

## **Conclusion**

- 12 Subject to the views of the three statutory consultees (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England), the preliminary screening report indicates that an SEA is not required for the Design and Sustainability SPD. Similarly, it would not need to be subject to full Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations.

**Appendix 1: Extract from the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan 2011-2029: Policy EM10 and supporting text**

**Policy EM10 - Delivering High Quality Development**

All development proposals will be of high quality, based upon a robust design-led approach.

1. Development proposals (excluding household extensions<sup>1</sup>) will be permitted where they:
  - a) Contribute to the provision of neighbourhoods and places for work and leisure that are well connected, accessible, safe, easy for people to find their way around and, function well in practical terms;
  - b) Are accessible to all and promote buildings that are durable, adaptable and able to respond to changing social, environmental, technological and economic conditions;
  - c) Positively contribute to the appearance and use of streets and other public spaces;
  - d) Promote the efficient use of land and achieve appropriate housing densities which respond to the local context, as informed by community documents<sup>2</sup>, and which take into account the urban, suburban or rural location of the site;
  - e) Provide a co-ordinated and comprehensive scheme that does not prejudice the future development or design of adjoining sites; and
  - f) Minimise energy consumption through sustainable approaches to design.
2. All development proposals will be required to respect the local environment and amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with the principles set out below. Development proposals will be permitted where they:
  - a) Positively contribute to local distinctiveness, the sense of place and the existing street scene, taking into account all relevant SPDs and community documents that identify the local character and distinctiveness of an area which is valued by local communities, whilst allowing for innovation where appropriate;
  - b) Provide a high quality of amenity for occupants of developments and neighbouring properties, having regard to such issues as overlooking, access to natural light, outlook and amenity space, in accordance with the Design and Sustainability SPD;
  - c) Have due regard to the density, scale, layout, appearance, architectural detailing, materials and history of the surrounding area, and the relationship to neighbouring buildings, landscape features and heritage assets;
  - d) Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture;
  - e) Provide appropriate parking provision (including bicycle storage), in terms of amount, design, layout and location, in accordance with the adopted parking standards; and

<sup>1</sup> Extensions to residential properties will be assessed using the criteria in list 2 of this policy.

<sup>2</sup> Community documents include, for example, Village Design Statements, Community Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and Orders, Urban Character Studies and Conservation Area Appraisals.

f) Provide appropriate internal and external waste and recycling storage areas and accessible collection points for refuse vehicles, in accordance with the Design and Sustainability SPD, in order to promote effective recycling and disposal of household and commercial waste.

- 6.79 This policy seeks to achieve high quality development across the borough, based upon a robust design-led process and a clear understanding of the local identity and context of development and the contribution better design can make to the creation of successful, inviting places where people want to live, work and enjoy themselves.
- 6.80 The borough contains a wide variety of settlements that vary in size, character, and the role that they play in the local area. The town of Basingstoke contains a vast array of different architectural styles from medieval almshouses to modern landmark office developments. This provides the challenge of responding to the very different design needs of rural and urban areas in terms of density, building styles and materials and highlights the need for a real understanding of the surroundings, local context and character before the design process begins. All future development will be expected to be of the highest quality and design, and respond positively to the local context. The council encourages creative and innovative design where appropriate.
- 6.81 The different towns, villages and landscapes of the borough have a distinctive character. This local distinctiveness of the landscape and built environment is fundamental to creating a 'sense of place' and makes an important contribution to the quality of life enjoyed by the borough's residents and visitors. Developments should positively contribute to this local distinctiveness and sense of place, taking into account the Design and Sustainability SPD, along with designations and locally produced documents that identify the local character and distinctiveness of an area that are valued by local communities.
- 6.82 Future development will assist in the transformation and regeneration of areas such as Basing View and some housing estates to provide them with locally distinctive, high quality environments.
- 6.83 Residential developments will be expected to provide a high quality of amenity for their occupants, including sufficient internal space and external amenity space. Further guidance is provided within the Design and Sustainability SPD including guidance on the subdivision of dwellings and Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs).
- 6.84 Good design relates not only to the appearance of a development but also how well it works in practical terms. Streets and other public spaces must be easy for people to find their way around, stimulating, with high quality street furniture providing a safe environment, in accordance with Secured by Design principles<sup>3</sup>. Development should also contribute to providing attractive public areas that promote biodiversity and healthy lifestyles. Development should be

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<sup>3</sup> Secured by Design is a Government-backed document, produced by ACPO, which explains how the design of development can reduce opportunities for crime.

flexible, accessible to all and should be able to respond to the challenges of climate change. Residential development should be built to a standard capable of adaptation to enable people to remain in their homes until old age.

- 6.85 Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing buildings (with the exception of householder extensions), shall be designed to minimise energy consumption. This requirement encompasses landform, landscaping, as well as layout, design, orientation, massing and materials. These requirements need to respect the local context and any relevant heritage assets. This approach prioritises 'passive' solutions in the form of measures such as high standards of insulation, air-tightness and appropriate orientation. However, as part of the council's positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources, new development should also be designed to facilitate the incorporation of renewable or low carbon technologies.
- 6.86 Developers should engage early and meaningfully with the local community and their representatives including councillors, where appropriate, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the council's Statement of Community Involvement<sup>4</sup>. Consultation prior to the submission of an application is a valuable and effective exercise in informing and achieving good design. When putting forward development proposals applicants are expected to explain, through an accompanying Design and Access Statement (when required) how they have taken a design-led approach in accordance with the principles set out in this policy and other relevant council design guidance. Other design guidance includes the Design and Sustainability SPD and its appendices as well as community led planning documents, such as Village Design Statements and Neighbourhood Plans. These community led documents describe the distinctive character of an area and set out design principles to demonstrate how local character can be protected and enhanced.

### Implementation and Monitoring

The policy will be implemented through:

- advice on and the determination of planning applications
- design based guidance set out in the Design and Sustainability SPD and other documents such as masterplans, planning briefs and design briefs
- local design advice arrangements providing independent advice on development proposals.

The policy will be monitored through:

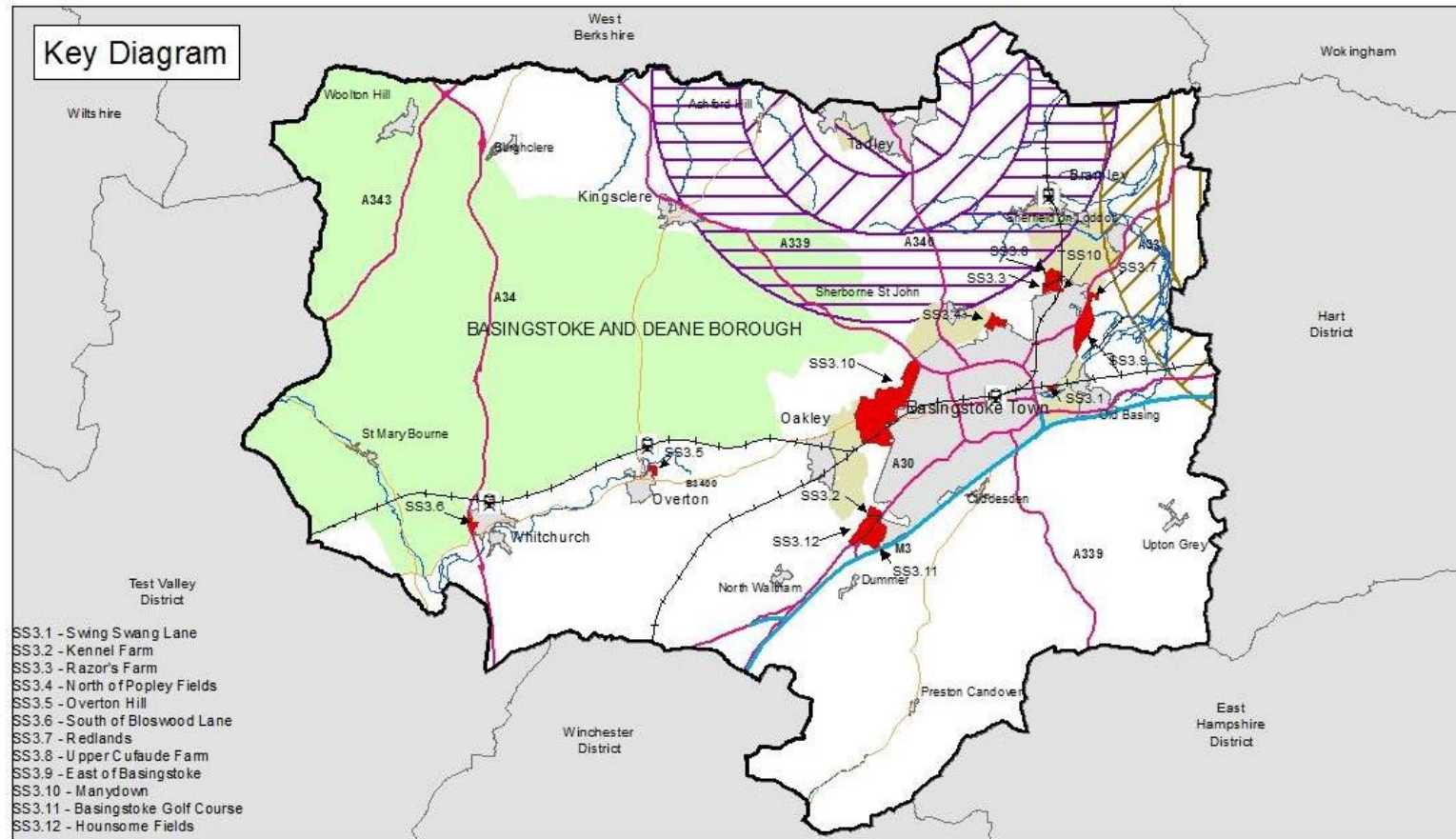
- Building for Life assessments.

Building for Life is a government endorsed method of assessing residential design quality, developed by CABE at the Design Council, Design for Homes and the Home Builders Federation. This provides a method against which to assess schemes and to see how effectively this policy is being applied by the council.

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<sup>4</sup> The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is produced by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and sets out the process for community engagement.

**Appendix 2: Extract from the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan 2011-2029: ‘Key Diagram’ showing the extent of the borough boundary**



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**Key**

- Site allocation
- Motorway
- Railway Station
- AWE 5km (middle zone)
- SPA 7km buffer zone
- North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Plan Area Boundary
- A Road
- Rail Network
- AWE 8km (outer zone)
- Rivers
- Settlements
- B Road
- AWE 3km (inner zone)
- SPA 5km buffer zone
- Proposed Strategic Gap