

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD

Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal Screening Statement

Reference: 289676-00

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This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

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1. Introduction

Ove Arup and Partners ('Arup') has been commissioned to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) / Sustainability Appraisal (SA) screening for the emerging Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD will eventually be adopted by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council to align with their adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

The following sets out the Screening Statement for this exercise, identifying whether there is a need for a full Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal for the SPD.

We advise that the Screening Statement be issued to Statutory Consultees for comment, and any comments are then added to an annex and published as part of the adoption of the SPD.

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal

Strategic Environmental Assessment is a process which ensures environmental impact is considered at the formation of plans stage (i.e. the strategic level). A Sustainability Appraisal does this, but it takes in a broader scope of impacts, looking at the economy and local communities/wider society as well as the environment (i.e. the assessment headings looked at under the banner of sustainability).

SA in the UK is mandatory under section 19 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires a local planning authority to carry out SA of each of the proposals in a plan, during its preparation. SEA is mandatory under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (“the SEA Regulations”). The requirement for an SEA is set out in the ODPM’s practical guidance on applying the European Directive 2001/42/EC. These documents set out the requirement for local planning authorities to undertake an SEA on land use plans or programmes that ‘sets out the framework for future development consents of projects.’

The adopted Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan (March 2024) has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, including Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA); these were carried out by Arup in 2020 and 2021. The 2008 Planning Act allows for SPDs to be prepared without a full SA as long as a screening assessment is carried out to establish whether there will be significant effects (i.e. this document), as defined in the SEA directive.

The need for an SA of Supplementary Planning Documents is removed by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009. The exceptions to this are plans that ‘determine the use of small areas at local level’ or and where it is determined that they are likely to have significant effects on the environment.¹

¹ The criteria taken for determining the significance of effects are taken from schedule 1 (9 (2) (a) and 10 (4) (a) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

3. Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document

The SPD aims to provide further guidance to support the application of Tameside Council's adopted planning policies, primarily contained within both Places for Everyone and the Unitary Development Plan, and ensure that new HMO developments contribute to sustainable and balanced neighbourhoods, while protecting residential character and amenity.

The document is designed for a wide range of stakeholders involved in the planning process, including:

- prospective applicants, developers, and landowners seeking to bring forward HMO proposals;
- planning officers and Elected Members responsible for assessing and determining applications; and
- local residents who wish to understand how the Council will apply planning policy to HMO development.

By setting out clear expectations, the SPD aims to improve transparency and support informed engagement in the planning process.

The SPD also outlines how the HMO licensing regime operates alongside the planning system. It explains the information required to validate planning applications for HMOs and clarifies the respective roles of planning control and licensing in managing standards, safety, and the wider impacts of HMO accommodation.

3.1 Relevant UDP Policies

The SPD will align itself with the adopted UDP, providing further planning advice and guidance for the development of HMOs. Therefore, the SPD will not introduce new planning policy and will only build on existing policy.

A Sustainability Appraisal was not completed for the UDP, however, this was found acceptable by the Inspector at public inquiry. Page 4 of the UDP states the following:

“Government guidance advises that a Sustainability Appraisal should take place as part of the plan making process, although this is not a mandatory requirement. The Council did commission an appraisal from consultants but was not satisfied with the approach and

decided to continue without it rather than delay the process. The Inspector considered this issue at the public inquiry and was relatively content that an appraisal would not find any fundamental flaws in the overall approach of the plan in seeking to achieve its sustainability objectives. The Council remains committed to the principle of Sustainability Appraisal.”

3.2 Relevant Places for Everyone Policies

The SPD will also align itself with Places for Everyone (PfE), a strategic plan adopted in March 2024 that covers 9 of the 10 Greater Manchester districts, prepared collaboratively by the boroughs concerned. There is no specific reference to HMOs within PfE, though reflecting the principles of the NPPF, the plan aims to provide high quality housing, that meets local need. PfE has already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, including Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA); these were carried out by Arup in 2020 and 2021.

Appendix A.1 sets out the relevant PfE policies, in addition to the conclusions made within the SA which, as mentioned, was conducted by Arup. As the SPD will align with PfE, these conclusions are referenced to demonstrate the plan’s relationship—and therefore the emerging SPD’s relationship—with the SA objectives. Overall, the relevant PfE policies were found to have broadly positive effects on the SA objectives.

For a full assessment of these policies, please see the ‘Greater Manchester Combined Authority Integrated Assessment of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, IA of 2020 Draft GMSF Consultation Document’ (Arup, 2020) and the ‘Greater Manchester Combined Authority Integrated Assessment of the Places for Everyone Plan, GMSF Main Report Addendum’ (Arup, 2021).

4. SEA / SA Screening

SPDs generally interpret policies that are within the Local Plan, of which, the Regulation 18 Draft has already undergone SEA / SA. If an SPD is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects through the screening process, then the conclusion will be that it is not necessary to carry out an SEA.

The Responsible Authority (Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council) must therefore undertake a screening process to identify if an SEA is required. This is based on a standard set of criteria per Annex II of the SEA Directive, which lists criteria for determining the likely significance of effects. If it is determined by the Responsible Authority that the SPD is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and does not require a full SEA, it must prepare a statement which provides reasons for this determination (i.e. this document).

The statement should then be subject to consultation with statutory consultees: Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England. Following consultation, the results should be provided in a publicly available Screening Statement.

4.1 The screening

The following table assesses the likely effects of implementing the SPD against criteria listed in Annex II of the SEA Directive.

Table 1: Determining the likely significance of effects per the SEA Directive

Criteria for determining the likely significance of the effects (Annex II, SEA Directive)	Likely to have significant effects?	Summary
1(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	No	<p>The HMO SPD supports the interpretation of adopted planning policies in relation to the development of HMOs and provides an understanding of the requirements for HMOs and their need for regulation.</p> <p>The SPD provides further guidance to support the application of Tameside's adopted planning policies and aims to ensure that proposals for such development do not give rise to harmful concentrations of HMOs and that new HMO developments contribute to sustainable and balanced neighbourhoods, while protecting residential character and amenity.</p>

		<p>The SPD also explains the role of the HMO licencing process, and the planning application validation requirements for all HMO proposals.</p> <p>The SPD will therefore supplement existing policies rather than setting the framework for projects and other activities and it does not allocate land uses.</p>
1(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans or programmes including those in a hierarchy	No	<p>The SPD provides supporting information and guidance for Tameside's adopted planning policies and therefore does not influence or modify them or other plans and programmes. It will be aligned with the adopted planning policies.</p> <p>As such it is influenced by other higher-level plans, rather than influencing them.</p>
1(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	No	<p>The SPD aims to provide further guidance to support the application of Tameside's adopted planning policies, and ensure that new HMO developments contribute to sustainable and balanced neighbourhoods, while protecting residential character and amenity. It therefore aligns with existing policies which promote sustainable development and will not have a significant effect on environmental considerations which have not already been considered.</p>
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	No	<p>The SPD is not expected to result in environmental problems relevant to the plan, as it provides guidance on Tameside's adopted planning policies</p> <p>Environmental considerations were considered throughout the preparation and adoption of planning policies for which the SPD provides guidance for. In addition, no environmental problems have been identified as a result of the guidance in the SPD.</p>
1(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)	No	<p>The SPD will not impact on the implementation of community legislation on the environment.</p>
2(a) the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects	No	<p>The SPD provides detailed guidance on the application of Tameside's adopted planning policies. The SPD itself does not bring forward development or allocate sites, rather it provides guidance for the assessment of HMOs as part of the planning application process.</p>

		As such there is no mechanism for significant environmental effects to arise from the SPD itself which has not already been considered as part of the production of adopted planning policies.
2(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	The SPD provides guidance supporting policy implementation, including when planning permission is required. As noted above, there is no mechanism within the SPD itself for significant environmental effects to arise and it is unlikely that any cumulative impacts will arise, as none are identified from the policies it supports.
2(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	No	The SPD relates only to HMO proposals within the LPA area and therefore is not anticipated to have any transboundary effects. As noted above there is no mechanism within the SPD itself for significant environmental effects to arise.
2(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	No	No risks to human health or the environment have been identified.
2(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No	The SPD applies to the entire Tameside Council area – with a resident population of 231,073 people (as of 2021 population estimates). It is considered that any effects not previously considered as part of adopted planning policies will be limited in magnitude.
2(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 (iii) intensive land-use	No	Given the nature of the document: i) None; ii) None; iii) None. The SPD will provide guidance but will not bring individual development forward which will be subject to other environmental assessments.
2(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	No	No significant effects are considered to arise on the adoption of the SPD in line with the adopted planning policies.

4.2 Screening summary

The results of the Screening Assessment, as seen in the table above, demonstrate that the draft SPD will not have significant environmental effects on Tameside. In addition, the draft SPD is not setting out new policy; it is supplementing and providing further guidance on existing policies (including PfE, which has already undergone an SEA/SA review). Therefore, the SPD should not be subject to a full or standalone SEA/SA.

5. Consultation

The Screening Statement should be sent to statutory consultees² for comment. The responses should be reviewed and incorporated where appropriate into this document to finalise the SEA/SA screening statement.

² Historic England, Natural England and Environment Agency

A.1 Relevant Places for Everyone Policies and SA Conclusions

To review a full assessment of these policies, please see the 'Greater Manchester Combined Authority Integrated Assessment of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, IA of 2020 Draft GMSF Consultation Document' (Arup, 2020) and the 'Greater Manchester Combined Authority Integrated Assessment of the Places for Everyone Plan, GMSF Main Report Addendum' (Arup, 2021).

A.1.1 Policy JP-H1 (scale, distribution and phasing of new housing development)

This policy has strong synergies with IA objective 1. The policy sets out a specific housing target based on the calculation of housing needed which also takes into account existing levels of affordability. The policy mentions how new housing will be focused in areas with central locations and good connections to main concentrations of employment, therefore supporting the sustainability aims for IA objective 1.

The policy also performs well against IA objective 9 which seeks to promote sustainable modes of transport, and this has been strengthened further.

IA objective 11 is also supported by the policy as green infrastructure will be provided through the suitable design of housing sites. This will benefit the local community short term, providing a place for recreation and tranquillity where communities can socialise. Long-term, the provision of green spaces will improve the health of residents by providing places for outdoor activity.

A.1.2 Policy JP-H3 (type, size and design of new housing)

The policy is focused on ensuring that developments support the delivery of a wide range of housing values and tenures, which reflect the needs within the local area. This would include supporting build to rent schemes where they are consistent with these principles.

The policy has synergies with IA objective 1 as it seeks to deliver a mix of housing values and tenures. As it aims to deliver a range of housing tenures, the policy scores positively against objective 4, reduce levels of deprivation and disparity, and objective 5, promote equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination.

The policy would address poor quality housing and ensure affordable and fair rents and also will encourage mixed and inclusive communities.

A.1.3 Policy JP-P1 (sustainable places)

Policy GM-P 1 is the overarching policy within the Economic Development chapter. The policy aims for a thriving and productive economy across all parts of Greater Manchester, maintaining economic diversity, facilitating the development of high value clusters, making the most of the assets within the sub-region e.g. graduates, existing and proposed transport infrastructure, maximising key growth locations, grasping opportunities in the transition to a low carbon economy and providing high-quality living environments to attract and retain skilled workers and graduates.

The policy states a number of key locations that will help to maximise economic growth:

- The City Centre
- Corridor Manchester
- The Quays
- The wider area of economic activity at the heart of GM – stretching from the Etihad Campus through the City Centre, the Quays, to Trafford Park and the Trafford Centre
- Manchester Airport Enterprise Zone
- Eight main town centres – Altrincham, Ashton-under-Lyne, Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport and Wigan
- Port Salford
- Heywood / Pilsworth
- M6 Logistics Hub

The policy generally has synergies with the housing, employment and transport objectives however the detail within the policy results in a number of unknowns throughout the assessment due to the detail provided on the exact locations.

A.1.4 Policy JP-C8 (transport requirements of new development)

The policy aims to require developments to support a significant increase in the proportion of journeys made by walking, cycling and public transport, and a reduction in the adverse environmental impacts of transport.

The policy aligns with objective 1 and objective 2 by providing walking and cycling routes which will have an overall positive impact on providing infrastructure to support connectivity between homes and employment land, centres and green spaces.

The policy aligns strongly with objective 3 which aims to provide transport improvements to support anticipated development. The policy would have a direct, positive effect on ensuring the transport network can support growth and prioritise walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure improvements.

The policy also has synergies with assessment criteria in objective 5 which aims to ensure equal access to infrastructure for all. The policy dictates transport requirements for all new developments which indirectly supports access to transport infrastructure for all.

There are also significant linkages between the policy and objective 6 which aims to support improved health and wellbeing. The policy supports enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure which would indirectly improve the health and wellbeing of users.

The policy has synergies with assessment criteria in objective 7 which aims to promote access to appropriate community infrastructure as the policy supports transport improvements which would indirectly enhance access to community social infrastructure.

The policy has positive effects on objective 9 which supports the use of sustainable modes of transport. This policy sets out requirements for delivering walking, cycling and public transport in new developments and therefore links very positively with this objective.

In addition, the policy has indirect positive links with objective 10 which aims to improved air quality, as an increase in active and public modes of transport would indirectly reduce car use and therefore car emissions. This also links to an assessment criterion in objective 15 which aims to promote a reduction in greenhouse gases, as the policy encourages a reduction in car emissions.