

## SEA Screening Statement – Affordable Workspace SPD (April 2022)

### 1. Legislative background and purpose of Strategic Environment Assessment and Sustainability Appraisals

- 1.1 The requirement for a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) is set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (commonly referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations), which implements the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC. Regulation 5 of the Directive sets out the types of plans that require an environmental assessment, which includes those that set the framework for future development consent. Regulation 5 (6) provides an exemption and states that an environmental assessment need not be carried out: (a) for a plan or programme which determines the use of a small area at local level; or (b) for a minor modification to a plan or programme, unless it has been determined that the plan, programme or modification, as the case may be, is likely to have significant environmental effects.
- 1.2 Section 39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local authorities to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. However the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 removes the automatic need for an SA of SPDs. This is because SPDs do not normally introduce new policies or proposals or modify planning documents which have already been subject to Sustainability Appraisal. National Planning Practice Guidance confirms that SPDs 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 Local Plan.
- 1.3 SEA/SAs are undertaken during preparation of plans or programmes and their purpose is to assess the sustainability of emerging plans or programmes. The EU Directive 2001/42/EC requires the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) of the *environmental* effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. The SA extends the reach of the SEA to incorporate *economic* and *social* issues relevant to the plan or programme.
- 1.4 The SA prepared on the Draft Revised Lambeth Local Plan Proposed Submission Version January 2020 (DRLLP PSV 2020) which also incorporated SEA is relevant to the Affordable Workspace SPD as the SPD provides further guidance of policies contained within the Lambeth Local Plan 2021, (in particular policy ED2) – these policies of which have already been subject to SA/SEA analysis.

### 2. Lambeth Local Plan

- 2.1 The revised Lambeth Local Plan was adopted by the Council in September 2021. This includes Policy ED2 Affordable Workspace, which makes provision to secure affordable workspace from major office developments in defined circumstances. The supporting text to the policy makes reference to guidance on implementation of the policy to be provided in an Affordable Workspace Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

### **3. Affordable Workspace Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

- 3.1 The role of the Affordable Workspace SPD is to support the implementation of Policy ED2. The SPD provides additional guidance to developers, landowners, the public, and other stakeholders, on the approach to securing affordable workspace. The adopted SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### **4. SEA Screening and this report**

- 4.1 This report is the Screening Statement on the SPD. It sets out results of SEA screening to date; responses from consultation bodies; determination of significant effects and; reasons that an SEA is not required.
- 4.2 The Responsible Authority (Lambeth Council) must determine whether a plan or programme under assessment is likely to have significant environmental effects. If the SPD is considered unlikely to have significant environmental effects through the screening process, then a SEA is not necessary. The assessment must be made taking account of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (see appendix 1), and in consultation with the Environmental Agency, Historic England and Natural England. If having consulted these bodies and undertaken this assessment the Council considers that the SPD is likely to have significant environmental effects, then a SEA would be required.
- 4.3 In February 2020 Lambeth Council consulted the three statutory bodies on the initial SEA screening of the draft SPD. Historic England and the Natural England responded to the consultation and agreed with the conclusion of the initial SEA screening that the draft SPD would not have significant environmental effects, and thus a full SEA is not required. The Environment Agency responded they do not comment on SEA screening opinions and therefore had no comment to make.
- 4.4 The Draft Affordable Workspace SPD was published for a first stage of consultation from 11 February 2020 to 7 April 2020. A further round of consultation of the Revised Draft Affordable Workspace SPD took place from 11 February 2022 to 13 April 2022. A total of nine responses were received in the recent second round of consultation, including a response from Natural England that they did not wish to provide specific comments.
- 4.5 Of the nine responses, five made no comment or were supportive of the content of the Revised Draft Affordable Workspace SPD. The other four responses made comments about the content of the Revised Draft Affordable Workspace SPD but these have not resulted into substantive changes to the SPD proposed for adoption.
- 4.6 In March 2022 the three statutory consultees were again consulted on the draft Screening Statement on the SPD proposed for adoption. All consultees responded to this consultation and continued to agree a SEA is not required.

5. **Determination**

5.1 Appendix 1 shows the results of the council's SEA screening for Lambeth's Affordable Workspace SPD. This screening demonstrates that the SPD is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment.

6. **Assessment of environmental effects and the reasons SEA is considered not required**

6.1 It is considered that the impact of the SPD, through responses to the SEA Directive Criteria (see Appendix 1), will not have significant environmental effects. The SPD does not set new policy; rather the SPD provides further guidance on how implementing policy on affordable workspace contained in the Lambeth Local Plan 2021. The three statutory bodies were consulted on the initial SEA screening on the draft SPD and the draft Screening Statement on the SPD proposed for adoption. All three bodies responded to these consultations and agreed that the SPD is unlikely to have significant effects and a SEA is not required. This screening statement concludes that the Affordable Workspace SPD is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and full SEA is not required.

**Appendix 1: Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment**

SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004	Is there significant environmental effect?	London Borough of Lambeth response
<b>1. Characteristics of the Affordable Workspace SPD</b>		
(a) The degree to which the SPD sets out a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	No	The SPD sets out further guidance on the application of policy ED2. It sets out different approaches by which affordable workspace can be provided; states the minimum requirements of the Workspace Management Plan; provides guidance on appropriate market rents (and therefore discounted rent for affordable workspace); sets out viability consideration; and sets out how affordable workspace obligations would be monitored. The SPD makes no provision for the allocation of resources. The SPD sits at the lowest tier of the development plan hierarchy and provides more detail to the policy ED2 established in upper tier plans (Lambeth Local Plan 2021) which has been subject to full SA and SEA. An SPD also has to be consistent with the development plan further up the hierarchy.
(b) The degree to which the SPD influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	No	Not applicable. The SPD does not influence other plans and programmes as it sits at the lowest tier in the hierarchy of Local Plan documents, of which have been subject to full SA and SEA.
(c) The relevance of the SPD for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	No	The substantive content of the SPD is not relevant to the integration of environmental considerations because it is only concerned with a very specific aspect of 'economic' infrastructure (that has social benefits also).

(d) Environmental problems relevant to the SPD	No	Not applicable. The SPD relates to economic issues not environmental problems.
(e) The relevance of the SPD for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (for example plans and programmes related to waste management or water protection)	No	The SPD will not impact on the implementation of community legislation on the environment. The SPD is not relevant to environmental legislation because the SPD does not control what is or is not built and where.
<b>2. Characteristics of the effects and area likely to be affected having particular regards to:</b>		
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	No	The SPD provides guidance on the implementation of Lambeth Local Plan Affordable Workspace policy ED2. No environmental effects are anticipated to result from implementation of the SPD.
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects of the SPD	No	The SPD will not have effects of a cumulative nature other than possibly economically and socially.
(c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects of the SPD	No	The SPD does not have any transboundary effects other than possibly economic and social effects.
(d) The risks to human health or the environment (eg due to accident)	No	There is no reason to believe the SPD would cause a risk to human health or the environment (eg due to accident).
(e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographic area and size of the population likely to be affected) by the SPD	No	The SPD is applicable to developments located within Lambeth and is aimed to bring economic and social benefit to the borough.
(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by the SPD due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</li> <li>• Exceeded environmental quality</li> </ul>	No	Not applicable. The SPD concerns the different approaches by which affordable workspace can be provided.

standards or limit values; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive landuse.</li> </ul>		
(g) The effects of the SPD on areas or landscapes which have recognised national community or international protected status	No	There are none of these areas in Lambeth.