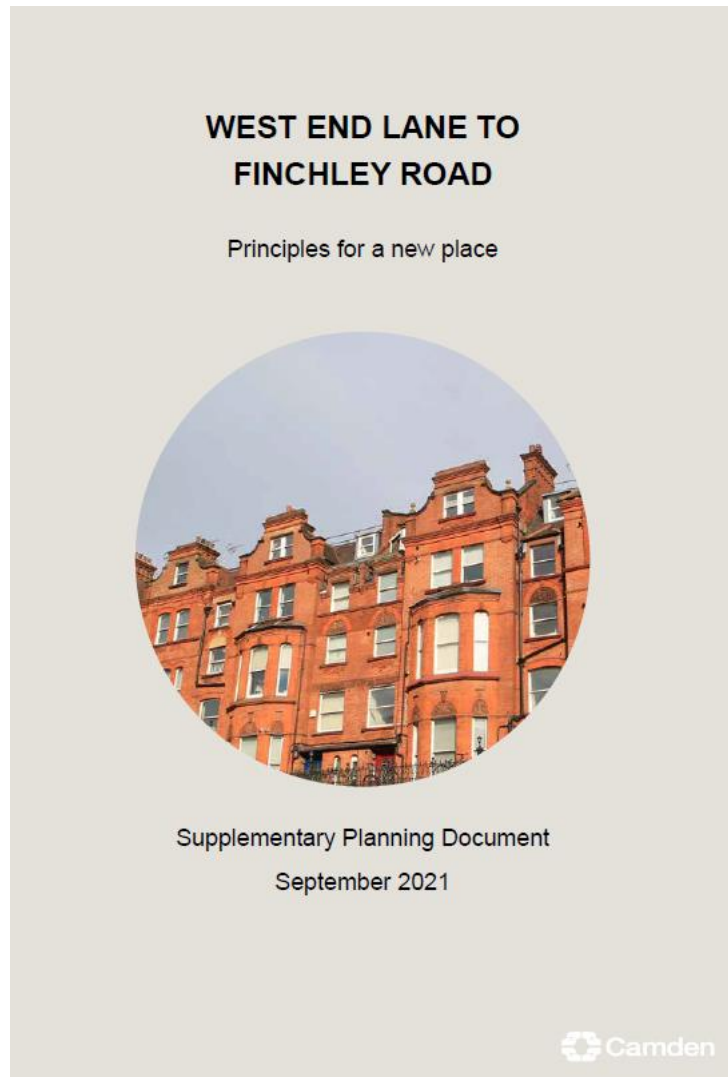


# Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report

## West End Lane to Finchley Road: Principles for a new place

### Supplementary Planning Document



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London Borough of Camden  
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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This screening report was prepared to consider whether the “West End Lane to Finchley Road: Principles for a new place” Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) should be subject of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in accordance with the related national legislation and regulations.

1.2 The report outlines the legislative and policy framework for the respective screening regimes, before considering whether significant environmental effects are likely to arise through the SPD that would require more detailed assessments.

1.3 A draft SPD was subject to public consultation from February– April 2021<sup>1</sup> and the SPD is intended to establish some key objectives and principles to guide future development and related improvements in the area covered. The nature and level of guidance is intended to support and complement other adopted and emerging development plan documents and policies, which have undergone (or are undergoing) equivalent and more detailed assessments<sup>2</sup>:

- Camden Local Plan (adopted July 2017)
- Camden Site Allocations Plan (adopted September 2013)
- Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (adopted September 2015)
- New Camden Site Allocations Plan (initial consultation on the draft plan took place in February-March 2020)

1.4 In accordance with the SEA and HRA Regulations this screening report and its conclusions were subject to consultation with the relevant statutory bodies; the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England.

## 2.0 Legal Framework

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

2.1 SEA is a procedure that evolved in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive) “on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”. The SEA Directive aimed to ensure a high level of protection for the environment and to integrate environmental considerations into the preparation of plans.

2.2 This has been transposed into legislation by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations), which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes if they are determined to be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

2.3 The Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines an SPD as a document which adds further detail to the policies in the development plan (which encompasses the London Plan, Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans) and can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design.

2.4 National Planning Practice Guidance states that whilst SPD do not require Sustainability Appraisal (SA)<sup>3</sup> they *may in exceptional circumstances* (our emphasis) require a SEA if they are assessed to be likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already have been assessed during the preparation of the relevant strategic policies<sup>4</sup>. The guidance goes on to state

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<sup>1</sup> [www.camden.gov.uk/westendlanetofinchleyroad](http://www.camden.gov.uk/westendlanetofinchleyroad)

<sup>2</sup> Where any required Sustainability Appraisals undertaken on these other plans will also incorporate the SEA requirements of the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)

<sup>3</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 removed the duty to produce a sustainability appraisal report for Local Development Documents other than Development Plan Documents

<sup>4</sup> [Strategic Environmental Assessment](#)

SEA is unlikely to be required where a SPD deals only with a small area at a local level, unless it is considered that there are likely to be significant environmental effects<sup>5</sup>.

2.5 In order to determine whether significant environment effects are likely, the local planning authority as “the responsible authority” need to take the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to the SEA Regulations<sup>6</sup> into account (reflecting Annex II of the SEA Directive) and consult the relevant bodies.

2.6 The outcome of Camden’s SEA screening process and the relevant body responses are detailed further in this report.

## **Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA)**

2.7 HRA relates to the procedures that originally evolved in accordance with European Directive (92/43/EEC) (the HRA Directive) to assess the possible impacts of a plan or project on designated European Sites of international nature conservation importance, that are protected for the benefit of the habitats and species they support, before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise them.

2.8 The Directive was transposed into legislation by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)( the HRA Regulations). These have since been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which became operable on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021<sup>7</sup>.

2.9 The designated European Sites included Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) relating to habitats and Special Protection Areas (SPA) relating to birds. Although not covered by the HRA Regulations, Ramsar sites (which are designated wetland sites of international importance) have previously been treated in the same way as designated European Sites. Collectively these were known as internationally designated sites (and assessments also extend to potential new sites) and formed part of the EU’s “Natura 2000” ecological network.

2.10 As a result of the EU Exit Regulations amendments, SACs and SPAs in the UK no longer form part of the Natura 2000 network and the 2019 Regulations create what is now termed the “national site network”. For the purposes of HRA, these sites are referred to as “habitats sites” in the National Planning Policy Framework and defined as any site included within the definition at regulation 8 of the HRA Regulations. Ramsar sites do not form part of the national network, but still remain protected in the same way as SACs and SPAs.

2.11 Government guidance states that *“all plans and projects (including planning applications) which are not directly connected with, or necessary for, the conservation management of a habitat site, require consideration of whether the plan or project is likely to have significant effects on that site. This consideration – typically referred to as the ‘Habitats Regulations Assessment screening’ – should take into account the potential effects both of the plan/project itself and in combination with other plans or projects.”*

2.12 The Council as “the competent authority” consulted Natural England for the purposes of this screening and must have regard to any representations that Natural England made and may agree to the plan or project only after ascertaining that it will not adversely affect the integrity of relevant habitats sites.

2.13 The outcome of Camden’s HRA screening process and Natural England response is detailed further in this report.

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<sup>5</sup> [Regulation 5\(6\) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-habitats-regulations-2017/changes-to-the-habitats-regulations-2017>

### 3.0 Purpose, priorities and objectives of the SPD

3.1 The NPPF defines SPDs as “documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions, but are not part of the development plan.”

3.2 The area of Camden covered by this SPD, based on land and sites located between West End Lane and Finchley Road, is located towards the north-west of the borough in West Hampstead and a large part is located within the designated Finchley Road and Swiss Cottage town centre.



3.3 The SPD area is currently characterised and dominated by the O2 shopping centre to the east and large low rise buildings to the west, within extensive areas of car parking and servicing routes. Hemmed in by railways to the north and south, with significant level changes and poor access routes for pedestrians, the area sits as an insular “island” between town centres and good travel networks either side. The SPD area has barriers to convenient and accessible movement and has significant variations in the quality and attractiveness of its streets, public realm and spaces; contributing to people unfriendly and unsafe feeling environments.

3.4 Redevelopment and the more effective use of land creates an opportunity to address these issues and deliver a significant number of new homes, including affordable homes, alongside the shops, workspaces and social and green infrastructure that are needed to support existing and new residential communities. The SPD has been prepared to support Camden’s adopted Local Plan policies and priorities and in particular Policy G1(Delivery and location of growth) that identifies the growth areas where major development can be expected and seeks development that will be consistent with the area priorities and principles set out in the plan.

3.5 Camden's Local Plan, Site Allocations Plan (current and emerging) and Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan recognise the opportunities for significant housing led development within this area and set out policies to guide new development. The Local Plan expects development in the West Hampstead area to contribute to:

- A mix of uses, including substantial new housing (including affordable housing), town centre, employment and community uses, and green/open space (with any substantial new town centre uses located within the Finchley Road/ Swiss Cottage town centre part of the area);
- Improved transport interchange accessibility and capacity and improved pedestrian and bicycle movement and routes;

- A substantially improved street environment around transport facilities, including improved crossings and wider pavements;
- Sustainable and safe design of the highest quality that respects the character and heritage value of West Hampstead.

3.6 The O2 Centre car park is already an allocated site in the adopted Site Allocations Plan (2013) and the SPD reflects and supports this allocation. The car park site and now the O2 Centre itself and further sites within the SPD area, including adjacent car showroom sites, are proposed to be allocated in a new version of this plan. This will provide the higher level policies and requirements for the development and use of land and has been undergoing its own Sustainability Appraisal and HRA screening assessments<sup>8</sup>. The Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2015) includes the SPD area within its boundary and sets out policies, objectives and aspirations for guiding development and improvement in the wider neighbourhood area, including sites covered by the SPD.

3.7 The guidance is intended to support the objectives contained in higher level plans and focuses on some key design and environmental principles to guide the high quality development that is required. These are supported by a number of other policies in the Local Plan in particular those seeking to make more effective use of land and to maximise the supply of new and affordable housing in well-designed and sustainable places.

3.8 Changing patterns of shopping in a pre-Covid pandemic world were already posing questions over the future nature of high streets and town centres and the pandemic has brought this into sharper focus; meaning that not only is the nature of shopping and leisure being re-evaluated, but also the way we live, work and travel, not only now, but in the future. Alongside meeting the challenges of climate change, the resultant implications and issues that need to be addressed range from the way new homes and workplaces are designed; the sustainability of the delivery, distribution and supply chains of goods and services; future car use; and the creation of the streets and spaces that make walking and cycling easier and safer. All of which should have positive environmental benefits.

3.9 With major redevelopment coming forward, these factors have contributed to a need for guidance to supplement and complement existing and emerging planning policies. It aims to guide future proposals which will be consistent with strategic policies, and respect and enhance the area's character, through high quality design, public realm and green infrastructure. Within the draft guidance consulted on three themes were identified, on which the vision for the future of the area, its objectives and principles were based<sup>9</sup>:

- **A New Place** - A new mixed use neighbourhood with its own distinct character; that integrates seamlessly into the wider city and is a more outward looking and inclusive place.
- **A Different Pace** - A more connected and liveable place; successfully linking a new neighbourhood with existing neighbourhoods and town centres, where greater priority is given to walking and cycling in a more accessible and inclusive place.
- **A Sustainable and Resilient Place** - A greener and environmentally friendly place; with a network of green and urban spaces of different forms and functions and requiring innovative measures to reduce environmental impacts.

3.10 The aim of the SPD is to supplement and build upon the priorities identified for the area in the adopted Local Plan and other plans and guidance. As an SPD, it cannot create new planning policies, allocate sites or set out policies for the development and use of land. However, it aims to provide the additional guidance needed to help ensure that emerging development is planned and designed in a coherent and integrated way and can deliver identified priorities, in particular a high-quality mixed-use environment and a more connected, accessible and greener place. In doing so, it complies with

<sup>8</sup> Published here: <https://www.camden.gov.uk/draft-site-allocations-consultation>

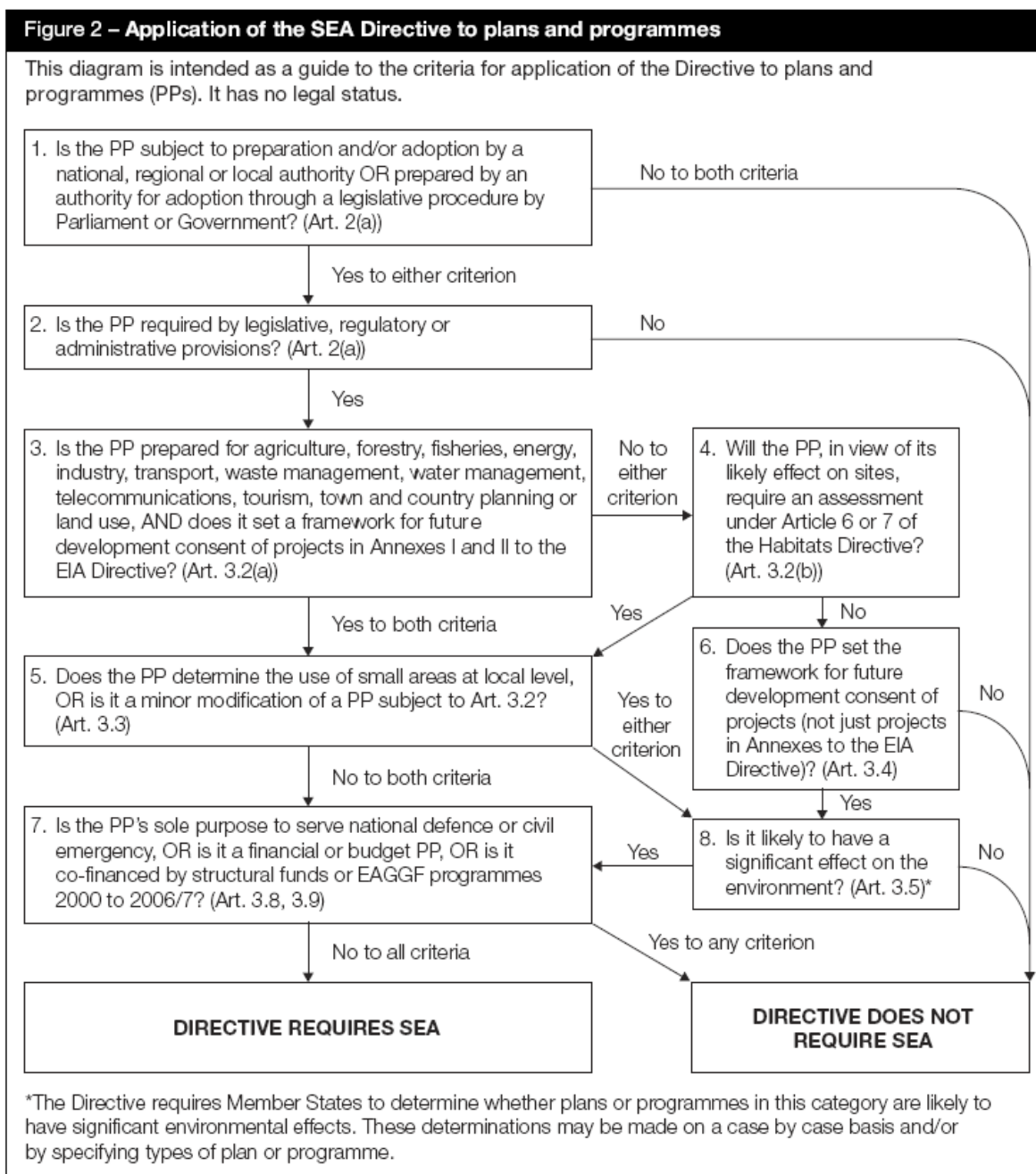
<sup>9</sup> It should be noted the draft SPD has been subsequently amended prior to planned adoption

Development Plan policies and also strongly complies with the NPPF and its evolving emphasis on the importance of high quality design.

## 4.0 SEA screening assessment

4.1 The “responsible authority” (in this case the London Borough of Camden) must determine whether a plan or programme, in this case the SPD, is likely to have significant environmental effects with reference to the criteria specified in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations.

4.2 Whilst there is no up to date guidance, a checklist guide to the application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes from Government guidance (reproduced below)<sup>10</sup> was used as a starting basis to help consider whether SEA is required, with further assessment in the tables below this checklist.



<sup>10</sup> ODPM (2005) A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive

<b>Application of SEA Directive to Plans and Programmes(PP)</b>		
1. Is the PP 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 SPD is being prepared and is planned to be adopted by the local authority	<b>Go to Step 2</b>
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))?	No - There is no statutory requirement to produce SPD. However, as it has been decided to produce the SPD, its preparation and adoption will be subject to relevant legislative, regulatory and administrative provisions and if adopted it will become a material consideration in decision-making	<b>Go to Step 3</b>
3. Is the PP 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 a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))?	No – The SPD is prepared for town and country planning purposes. However, whilst it identifies potential development sites in the area where future proposals may meet thresholds for which EIA may be required when they come forward, it does not allocate sites or set out policies for the development or use of land. It does not set a framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive <sup>11</sup> .	<b>Go to Step 4</b>
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))	No - The draft SPD is supplementary to the adopted Local Plan, Site Allocations Plan and a Neighbourhood Plan which have been subject of screening assessments under the Habitats Directive where no significant adverse effects have been identified. The SPD is subject of its own HRA screening assessment outlined in Section 5 of this report.	<b>Go to Step 6</b>
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	No - The SPD does not allocate sites or set out policies for the development or use of land and does not set a framework for future development consent of projects (even those not listed in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive).	<b>This indicates the SPD does not require SEA</b>
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)	The answers above indicate that SEA is unlikely to be required for the SPD. However potential effects have been	<b>See table below: Determining the Likely</b>

<sup>11</sup> Transposed into Schedule 1 and 2 Development in The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017)



	considered further and the SPD is subject of its own SEA screening assessment outlined below.	<b>Significance of Effects on the Environment</b>
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### Criteria for determining likely significance of effects

4.3 The criteria for assessing the likely significance of effects in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations are set out in the table below, along with consideration of the potential impact of the SPD against each. This screening assessment has also taken into account that Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) has taken place on the adopted Camden Local Plan and Site Allocations DPD and an SEA on the Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

4.4 In the case of the former, the SA process (2016) highlighted that changes could be made to enhance the positive effects of the Plan and changes were incorporated. The SA also highlighted areas where there would be negative effects in relation to SA objectives and criteria and informed the inclusion of mitigation measures to eliminate or reduce the effects. In the case of the Site Allocations Plan, the SA process (2012) found that the plan delivered positive sustainability effects and that the allocated sites overall delivered positive outcomes in sustainability terms against the relevant sustainability objectives. The Inspector reports on both plans confirmed compliance with relevant legal requirements.

4.5 In the case of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Council concluded (2013) that the draft Neighbourhood Plan was likely to have significant environmental effects. The determination was subject to consultation with the three statutory bodies and the view was that SEA was required and an SEA was undertaken, which considered alternative scenarios, and a small number of recommendations were made which were taken into the examination version of the plan. The final version of the SEA, together with a non-technical summary, was published in August 2014<sup>12</sup>.

<b>SEA Directive Criteria and Schedule 1 of Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effects?</b>
<b>Characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular to:</b>		
1a) 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	The draft SPD, if adopted, would contribute to an existing framework of policies and guidance for future projects and activities in the area and includes some broad themes and principles, but does not set a framework. It has regard to national policy and is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the borough. The SPD does not create new policies or allocate sites for particular development or uses or address issues outside of those already assessed in the Council's Local Plan and Site Allocations DPD SA (incorporating SEA) and SEA on the Neighbourhood Plan, and as such is not considered to have significant effects in this regard.  The SPD does not allocate resources.	<b>No</b>
1b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	Whilst a material consideration in decision-making, SPD sit at a lower level in the hierarchy of planning policy documents and are weighted accordingly.  Providing supplementary guidance to support existing policies in the NPPF and the Development Plan (which includes the London Plan, Local Plan	<b>No</b>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.camden.gov.uk/web/guest/fortune-green-and-west-hampstead-neighbourhood-forum>

	<p>and Neighbourhood Plan) the SPD will have a limited influence on other plans and programmes at higher levels in the hierarchy and acts to provide more detail to some of the priorities and principles established in higher level plans, which have been subject to SA and SEA.</p> <p>The SPD provides a context and some principles which may be incorporated in an emerging Site Allocations Plan which is also undergoing SA. This is not considered to have significant effects in this regard.</p>	
1c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	<p>The SPD promotes sustainable development in accordance with the principles of the NPPF and Development Plan and seeks to make a positive contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental).</p> <p>In particular, the potential redevelopment of sites creates opportunities, which the SPD supports, to reduce the dominance of cars and car parking, deliver improvements to the quality of streets and connections across the area for walking and cycling and new areas of open and green spaces as part of an enhanced green infrastructure network.</p>	<b>No</b>
1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	<p>The SPD is not considered to introduce or exacerbate any environmental problems. It has appropriately identified, and responded to, some of the environmental issues in the SPD area.</p> <p>Together with the Local Plan and other adopted plans and guidance, this SPD adds to a policy context and framework within which acceptable development proposals and associated improvements can be prepared. It addresses local environmental problems and should positively assist in mitigating identified issues with an emphasis on more sustainable forms of development, improving the public realm and connectivity of the area and creating new areas of open and green spaces which are currently deficient. Overall, it should have beneficial effects.</p>	<b>No</b>
1e) 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>The SPD through its objectives and the encouragement of high quality and sustainable design will be indirectly relevant to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment. However, this will not be to any significant extent in the scope and nature of the localised positive outcomes envisaged, eg supporting improved air quality through promotion of walking/cycling, improved health and well-being through provision of green spaces/tree planting as part of redevelopment proposals.</p>	<b>No</b>
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>		
2a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>The SPD guidance, objectives and principles are not considered to extend significantly beyond the policies which have already been subject to SEA and SA where no significant effects were identified. The phasing of development can be appropriately managed and mitigated through measures such as s106 agreements and Construction Management Plans.</p>	<b>No</b>

2b) The cumulative nature of the effects	Cumulative effects occur where the outcome of one or more policies, when put together, have a significant combined effect. The draft SPD does not allocate sites for development nor does the guidance extend beyond supplementing the plans and policies which have already been subject to SEA and SA.	<b>No</b>
2c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects	There are not considered to be any significant trans-boundary effects arising from the SPD.	<b>No</b>
2d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	The SPD will not create significant risks to human health or the environment. Instead there are expected to be positive outcomes, eg through the creation of new green spaces and enhancement of green infrastructure, improved health and wellbeing through realigned transport priorities to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport.	<b>No</b>
2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The SPD guidance applies to a local area and the magnitude and spatial extent of potential effects will be limited. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared to assess the community profile and the potential effects (negative and positive) of the SPD on the local population and the extent of effects are not considered sufficient to warrant SEA.	<b>No</b>
2f) 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  iii) intensive land-use	Development Plan policies relating to land use, design, cultural heritage, amenity and environmental protection will apply alongside the principles and guidance in the SPD. The SPD highlights the character of the area and the need for appropriate and contextual design responses and includes a number of sustainability objectives to reflect adopted policies.  The extent of effects are not considered sufficient to warrant SEA.	<b>No</b>
2g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	The SPD does consider potential effects on the character of the local area, however there are no areas or landscapes of national, Community or international protection status within the SPD area or in close proximity to be directly affected by the guidance in the SPD.  The HRA screening opinions on other plans confirm this position (see HRA section below).	<b>No</b>

4.7 The draft SPD highlights that there are a number of constraints in the SPD area and local environmental issues to resolve with neighbouring locally designated nature conservation assets to protect, preserve or enhance. The guidance is intended to support the delivery of the high quality design of sites, streets, connections and public spaces and green infrastructure that can assist this and there should be positive local effects.

4.8 The draft SPD is in broad conformity with the policies of development plan documents that have undergone SA and SEA screening, which concluded they were unlikely to have significant environmental effects. The guidance contained in the lower level SPD is considered to be similarly unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects in accordance with the criteria considered.

## 5.0 HRA screening assessment

5.1 In addition to the screening of the draft SPD in relation to SEA, there is a requirement to consider whether a plan or project is likely to have significant effects on internationally designated sites of nature conservation importance or an adverse impact on the integrity of those sites.

5.2 The regulations set out a process to assess the potential implications of a plan or project on these sites, the first stage of which is a screening assessment where designated sites within the area or a reasonable distance from the area are identified to see if there is any potential for a plan or project to have an adverse impact on any of these sites. These sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Offshore Marine Sites (OMSs) as well as Ramsar sites, previously known as the “Natura 2000” network.

5.3 This screening assessment has taken into account that HRA screening has taken place on the adopted Local Plan, Site Allocations Plan and Neighbourhood Plan respectively.

5.4 Camden Council’s screening of the Draft Local Plan (2015) identified four Natura 2000 sites within 10 km of the borough – three Special Areas of Conservation: Epping Forest, Richmond Park and Wimbledon Common; and one Special Protection Area: the Lee Valley (also a Ramsar site). Whilst these are no longer part of the Natura 2000 network they are still designated sites within the new national site network.

5.5 The Screening opinion concluded that: *“It is considered that the policies contained in the draft Local Plan are unlikely to have significant effects on sites of European importance for habitats or species, or an adverse impact on the integrity of those sites. Therefore it is not considered necessary to carry out Task 2 (Appropriate Assessment) and Task 3 (mitigation and alternative solutions) of the Habitats Regulations Appropriate Assessment.”*

5.6 The Inspectors report (2017) confirmed that the HRA screening complied with legal requirements and that the determination that further assessment was not required was supported by Natural England.

4.6 The adopted Site Allocations Plan was subject of HRA screening (2012) and concluded that *“None of the proposed sites were found to have likely significant effects on the sites of European importance for habitats or species, or an adverse impact on the integrity of the sites”*. The inspectors report confirmed compliance with relevant legal requirements. The new SALP consultation draft has also been subject of initial HRA screening (2020) and concluded *“The proposed draft SALP policies in combination with other plans and projects are not considered likely to have significant effects on the sites of European importance for habitats or species, or an adverse impact on the integrity of the sites.”*

5.7 The Council’s screening of the draft Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan Neighbourhood also considered whether that plan’s policies would give rise to impacts on the same four Natura 2000 sites already assessed through the local plan process. The Council concluded that the smaller area plan would be unlikely to have significant effects and no further assessment was required. The independent examiner report confirmed *“From the context and submitted material, I have concluded that the plan would not be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site.”*

5.8 For the purposes of this HRA screening assessment a “reasonable distance” has been taken to be sites within 15 km of the SPD area itself<sup>13</sup> (see map below). It reconfirms that no designated national network sites or Ramsar sites are located within the borough and identifies the same four sites which have been subject of previous screenings. This screening has also considered whether any further potential candidate sites exist or have been designated since previous screenings and none have been identified.

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<sup>13</sup> Previous screenings looked at sites within 10 km of the borough boundary.



5.9 The SPD is in broad conformity with the policies of development plan documents that have undergone HRA screening, which concluded they were unlikely to have significant effects on relevant sites of importance for habitats or species, or an adverse impact on the integrity of those sites. The guidance contained in the lower level SPD is therefore similarly unlikely to have significant effects or an adverse impact on the integrity of those sites.

5.10 This does not mean other locally designated sites of nature conservation interest may not be affected by proposals and this will need relevant ecological assessments. As development proposals come forward they will be required to assess the impacts on the local area, landscapes and ecological context and the draft SPD highlights that there are locally designated sites of importance for nature conservation (SINCs) alongside adjacent railway lines.

5.11 The Thameslink and Metropolitan and Jubilee line corridors are identified as strategic wildlife corridors and encompass the West Hampstead Railsides, Medley Orchard and Westbere Copse SINC (Site of Borough Grade I Importance for Nature Conservation) and the Local Plan Policies Map highlights the “missing links” between green spaces along these corridors.

5.12 One of the key principles of the draft guidance is the creation of a mix of open and green spaces of different forms and functions. It supports measures to improve and add to green infrastructure and networks, and development creates the opportunity to create new areas of greenspace and strengthen existing biodiversity corridors along the railways. These should have positive local effects.

## 6.0 SEA and HRA Screening Conclusions

6.1 The Council considered the scope and content of the draft SPD for the purposes of determining whether the guidance is likely to give rise to any significant environmental effects or is likely to have significant effects on designated national network or Ramsar sites of importance for habitats or species, or an adverse impact on the integrity of those sites.

6.3 In making its assessments, the Council has had regard to the respective SA and SEA/HRA screening opinions that have been previously undertaken on higher level development plan documents.

**6.4 The Council determined through this SEA screening assessment that the SPD is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects.**

**6.5 The Council determined through this HRA screening assessment that the SPD is unlikely to have significant effects on sites of importance for habitats or species (previously Natura 2000 sites), or an adverse impact on the integrity of those sites.**

6.6 This assessment and conclusions will not negate the need to consider whether further assessments, such as an Environmental Impact Assessment, will be required for specific development proposals and related planning applications in the area covered by the SPD.

## 7.0 Consultation with relevant bodies

7.1 In accordance with the respective regulations the Council consulted the statutory consultation bodies on the screening report in March 2021:

- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England (in respect of both SEA and HRA screening)

7.2 In respect of the SEA and HRA assessments we received the following responses:

- **Environment Agency-** *Based on a review of environmental constraints for which we are a statutory consultee, there are no areas of fluvial flood risk, watercourses or groundwater bodies within the plan area. Therefore we do not consider there to be potential significant environmental effects relating to these environmental constraints or other environmental sensitivities within our remit and have no further comments to make.*
- **Historic England-** *We would agree that the SPD in question does not require a separate SEA given that the adopted local plan from which the content has been derived has been subject to a full Sustainability Appraisal, and that the draft SPD is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment.*
- **Natural England-** *It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan. A draft SPD is unlikely to give rise to significant effects and therefore neither SEA nor HRA will be required.*

7.3 The outcome of this screening confirms that neither SEA nor HRA are required, and in accordance with regulations, this report will be published on the Council's website to demonstrate that SEA and HRA issues have been taken into account and considered during the preparation of the SPD.