

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Statement

March 2026



Introduction

1.1 This screening statement has been prepared to determine whether the proposed Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (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 to establish whether there would be any significant effects on European site(s) in accordance with Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

1.2 The purpose of the Affordable Housing SPD is:

- the effective implementation of Policy LN2: Affordable Housing in the Rushmoor Local Plan 2019¹
- provide further guidance to support the implementation of the affordable housing policies of the Rushmoor Local Plan (2019) and housing delivery objectives of the Rushmoor Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2023-2027².
- Ensure the delivery of affordable housing that meets residents' needs and aspirations, and which supports the delivery of sustainable, inclusive communities.

1.3 The SPD contains:

- Policy context based upon the Rushmoor Local Plan 2019
- Evidence taken from the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment (SHMA) 2014-2032³
- Inclusion of the key priorities to demonstrate how the Affordable Housing SPD assists the council in meeting these, especially Homes for All: Quality Living, Affordable Housing
- Guidance for procuring a registered provider

¹ <https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policies/the-rushmoor-local-plan/>

² [Rushmoor Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2023 - 2027](#)

³ [Hart, Rushmoor and Surrey Heath SHMA: Draft Report](#)

Strategic Environmental Assessment – Regulatory Requirements

- 1.4 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessment legislation is the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 \(SEA Regulations\)](#)⁴ which was transposed from European Directive 2001/42/EC. Detailed guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication '[A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#)'⁵ and Paragraph 11-008 (Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal) of the [Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\)](#)⁶. This states that:

“supplementary planning documents do not require 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”.

- 1.5 Under the requirements of the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations \(2004\)](#)⁷, certain types of plans that set the framework for the consent of future development projects, must be subject to an environmental assessment.
- 1.6 The objective of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The Strategic Environmental Appraisal Process

- 1.7 The first stage of the process is for the Council to determine whether the SPD is likely to have significant effects on the environment. This screening process includes assessing the SPD against a set of criteria (as set out in [Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations](#))⁸. The results of this are set out in Table 3 of Appendix 1 of this statement. The aim of this statement is therefore to provide sufficient information to ascertain whether the SPD is likely to have significant environmental effects. The Council has consulted the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England on this screening statement.
- 1.8 Where the Council determines that a SEA is not required, Regulation 9(3) of the SEA Regulations states that the Council must prepare a statement setting out the reasons for this determination.

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made>

⁵

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made>

⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/schedule/1/made>

Strategic Environmental Assessment Determination

- 1.9 Before making a determination under Regulation 9, the three statutory bodies were consulted between 22nd January 2026 and 5th March 2026. The responses received are as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Comments received by Statutory Consultation Bodies

| Statutory Consultation Body | Comments |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Natural England | Agree with determination of no need for HRA/SEA. |
| Environment Agency | No response received. |
| Historic England | Our view is that a SEA is not required in this instance. |

- 1.10 Having regard to the considerations above, the Council considers that the Affordable Housing SPD is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. This determination was made on the 23rd March 2026.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.11 In addition to the SEA, the Council is required to consider a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). HRA is the process used to determine whether the plan or project would have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any internationally designated sites of nature conservation importance, known as European sites. The need for an HRA is set out within the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 \(as amended\)](#)⁹, which transposed EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC into UK law. The Rushmoor Local Plan 2019 was subject to a [comprehensive HRA](#).¹⁰
- 1.12 The [HRA \(Appendix 1\)](#)¹¹ screened out the Local Plan Policies LN2, DE2 and DE3 at an early stage, based on the following conclusions:

Table 2: Summary of Rushmoor Local Plan HRA Screening Decisions

| Policy | Rushmoor Local Plan HRA Screening Decision |
|--|--|
| Policy LN2: Affordable Housing | The policy is concerned with the delivery of affordable housing, setting out the mix of dwelling sizes and types to meet local needs, where the criterion is met. No HRA implications. |
| Policy DE2: Residential Internal Space Standards | The policy is concerned with the internal layout and size to ensure any new dwellings or conversions serve the amenity requirements of occupiers. No HRA implications |
| Policy DE3: Residential Amenity Space Standards | The policy is concerned with the requirement to provide good quality, useable private outdoor space in the forms of gardens, balconies and/or roof terraces. No HRA implications. |

⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/490/content>

¹⁰ https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/media/wrznaddk/habitats_reg_assessment_2017_-_final.pdf

¹¹ https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/media/wrznaddk/habitats_reg_assessment_2017_-_final.pdf

Conclusion

- 1.13 Based on the screening process, it is the Council's opinion that the Affordable Housing SPD does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment under the SEA regulations or an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations. This is because there will be no negative significant environmental, social or economic effects arising from its implementation, as it seeks only to expand upon and provide guidance for the effective and consistent implementation of Local Plan policies.

Appendix 1

Table 3: Establishing Whether There Is a Need for an SEA

Based on Figure 2 – Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes from '[A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#)'¹²

| Assessment Criteria | Yes/No | Assessment |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| 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. Proceed to Q2 | Supplementary Planning Documents are prepared by local planning authorities under the provisions of Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. |
| 2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2 (a)) | Yes. Proceed to Q3 | The SPD is consistent with and expands upon the Rushmoor Local Plan 2019. It is therefore necessary to answer the following questions to determine further if an SEA is required. |
| 3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, water 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 Environmental Impact Assessment Directive? (Art 3.2 (a)) | No. Proceed to Q4 | Although the SPD is prepared for affordable housing in relation to town and country planning purposes, it does not set a framework for future development consent for projects that are required to undergo an Environmental Impact Assessment. |
| 4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b)). | No. Proceed to Q6 | The SPD will provide further guidance on policies in the adopted Local Plan. These policies have been subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment. See paragraph 1.11 and table 1 in this document. |

| Assessment Criteria | Yes/No | Assessment |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| 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). | Yes. Proceed to Q8 | The SPD provides further guidance to supplement policies related to affordable housing. The SPD does not allocate land, and it does not set policy or a framework for future development, but it does provide guidance in relation to policies in the Rushmoor Local Plan. |
| 8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5) | No | Directive does not require SEA. |

Table 4: Assessment of the Likelihood of the Affordable Housing SPD Having Significant Effects on the Environment

| Significant Effect Criteria | Potential Effects of the SPD | Is There a Likely Significant Effect? |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| 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; | The SPD provides more detail on the policies and principles established in the Rushmoor Local Plan 2019, which has been subject to comprehensive SA incorporating SEA ¹³ . The purpose of the SPD is to provide guidance on the effective and consistent implementation of the relevant policies in paragraph 1.2 above. The guidance in the SPD must not and does not conflict with the policies in the Local Plan and as such are subservient and supplement the Local Plan. | No |
| b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy; | The purpose of the SPD is to supplement the Local Plan policies and sits below the Local Plan in terms of the Development Plan hierarchy. | No |

¹³ https://www.rushmoor.gov.uk/media/rt5pdvto/sa_reg_19_final_report.pdf

| Significant Effect Criteria | Potential Effects of the SPD | Is There a Likely Significant Effect? |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development; | The adopted Local Plan and other higher-level policies set the context for achieving sustainable development in the borough. The SPD will not change the higher-level policy requirements which have, in themselves, been subject to SA (inc. SEA). The SPD will assist with meeting the SA (inc. SEA) objectives. | No |
| d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; | The Local Plan SA (inc. SEA) identified that Policy LN2, DE2 and DE3 will make a positive contribution to the accessibility and improve the quality of the built environment. The SPD will provide further guidance and reinforce relevant parts of the policies. | No |
| e) The relevance of the plan or programme for implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection) | The purpose of the SPD is to provide guidance on the effective and consistent implementation of policies LN2, DE2 and DE3 relating to the provision of affordable housing. The Rushmoor Local Plan contains other policies relating to these objectives. | No |

Table 5

| SEA Directive Criteria | Response | Is There a Likely Significant Environmental Effect? |
|--|--|---|
| Characteristics of the effects likely having regard, in particular, to: | | |
| a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects | The SPD is not expected to give rise to any significant environmental effects. The SPD seeks to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of policies relating to affordable housing. | No |

| | | |
|--|--|----|
| b) The cumulative nature of the effects; | The SPD is not considered to have any significant cumulative effects. The SPD seeks to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of policies relating to provision affordable housing. | No |
| c) The transboundary nature if the effects; | The SPD is not expected to give rise to any significant transboundary environmental effects. | No |
| d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents); | There are no anticipated effects of the SPD on human health or the environment. The SPD seeks to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of policies relating to affordable housing. | No |
| e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected); | The effective and consistent implementation of policies relating to affordable housing will have positive benefits for all Rushmoor residents and those who wish to move to Rushmoor. | 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; | The SPD is not anticipated to adversely affect any special natural characteristic or cultural heritage. Nor would the SPD be expected to lead to the exceedance of environmental standards or promote intensive land use. Matters relating to environmental standards and land use are contained in the Rushmoor Local Plan. | No |
| g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status. | The SPD is not expected to have any adverse effect on areas with national, community or international protection. | No |
| Part 2 Overall Conclusion | No Likely Significant Environmental Effect | |