

Screening Statement on the determination of the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Bilston Urban Village High Street Link Supplementary Planning Document

1.0 Introduction:

Strategic Environmental Assessment screening and the 2004 Regulations

- 1.1 Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations), Councils must carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of land-use and spatial plans.
- 1.2 Where the Council can demonstrate that any land-use or spatial plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (Regulation 9(3)), or where the proposed development is less than 0.5 hectares in area, a SEA will not be required.
- 1.3 The first stage in the SEA process is for the Council to determine whether or not a plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The regulations advise that this is determined by a screening process, which should use a specified set of criteria (set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations). The results of this process must be summarised in an SEA screening statement, which must be publicly available.
- 1.4 The Council has a duty to consult with specified environmental organisations (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency) when determining the need for SEA. In situations where SEA is not deemed to be required, the Council has a duty to prepare a statement of its reasons for determining that SEA is not required. The SEA Screening Statement should provide sufficient information to demonstrate whether the SPD is likely to have significant environmental effects. In the situation whereby it is concluded that there are not to be significant environmental effects and therefore no need for SEA this statement will clearly indicate the reasons for such a decision.

2.0 Bilston Urban Village – High Street Link SPD

- 2.1 The High Street Link SPD sets out to identify the issues and opportunities in bringing forward a scheme to link the new Urban Village development south of the Black Country Route with Bilston Town Centre and the markets.
- 2.2 The preparation of the SPD will involve the local community in line with the requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and in line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

3.0 Requirement for Screening

3.1 The preliminary assessment of whether or not SEA is required led to the conclusion that screening is necessary for the following reasons.

- The SPD is subject to preparation and adoption by a Local Authority
- The SPD is required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions
- The SPD is prepared for town planning

3.2 The screening process set out in Regulation 9 and Schedule 1 of the Regulations includes two sets of characteristics for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment. These relate firstly to the characteristics of the SPD and secondly to the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected. There are a number of criteria relating to each of these characteristics, the answers to which are set out below.

Characteristics of the Bilston High Street Link SPD

1.	Criterion	Is there an effect?	Is there a significant environmental effect?	Justification
(a)	The degree to which the Bilston High Street Link SPD sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	Yes	No	The Bilston High Street Link SPD sits at the lowest tier of the development plan system. In this respect it does not set a framework for other plans and strategies. Instead it offers site specific guidance to supplement Local Plan saved policies.
(b)	The degree to which the Bilston High Street Link SPD influences other plans and programmes including those in the hierarchy.	No	No	The Bilston High Street Link SPD sits at the lowest tier of the development plan system. In this respect it does not set a framework for other plans and strategies.

(c)	The relevance of the Bilston High Street Link SPD for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	Yes	No	The Bilston High Street Link SPD will promote sustainable development through good design and control of development and the encouragement of pedestrian journeys. It will not, however, provide environmental policy in its own right so does not have a significant environmental effect on environmental considerations. It will supplement Local Plan policy.
(d)	Environmental problems relevant to the Bilston High Street Link SPD.	Yes	No	Environmental problems may be identified through consultation on and revisions to the Bilston High Street Link SPD. The main problem is intended to be removed through the acquisition and clearance of poor quality buildings and high quality new build development. The refurbishment of a Locally Listed building is also planned.
(e)	The relevance of the Bilston High Street Link SPD for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	No	No	The Bilston High Street Link SPD is not relevant to the implementation of EC legislation.

Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected

2.	Criterion	Is there a significant environmental effect?	Justification
(a)	The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects of the Bilston High Street Link SPD	No	The Bilston High Street Link SPD will not set policy. It will, however, issue guidance to encourage good design and best practice to ensure that wherever possible, the effects are positive.
(b)	The cumulative nature of the effects of the Bilston High Street Link SPD	No	The Bilston High Street Link SPD will have no significant cumulative effects.
(c)	The trans-boundary nature of the effects of the Bilston High Street Link SPD	No	There are no trans-boundary issues across Member States.
(d)	The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents) of the Bilston High Street Link SPD	No	There are no significant risks to human health or the environment. The acquisition and clearance of potentially dangerous buildings will result in a safer environment.
(e)	The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) by the Bilston High Street Link SPD	No	Any effects will be confined to the site and its immediate surroundings.
(f)	The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected by the Bilston High Street Link SPD due to: (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values or (iii) intensive land use	No	The SPD translates established Government and local guidance on town centre development to a site specific level. The SPD addresses cultural heritage issues in requiring archaeological works to be undertaken and the retention and refurbishment of a building which is on the local list. It will be linked to adopted Policy and the Policy itself is likely to have the significant effects. The SPD will merely supplement the Policy.

(g)	The effects of the Bilston High Street Link SPD on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	No	Not relevant.
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4.0 The Statement of Determination

Determination of the need for SEA

- 4.1 It is considered that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is NOT required for the Bilston High Street Link SPD for the reasons set out in Section 3 above.

Consultation with Statutory Bodies

- 4.2 The following organisations have been consulted on this determination and their comments will be incorporated into this determination Statement.

Organisation	Comment
English Heritage	Awaited
Environment Agency	Awaited
Natural England	Awaited

Conclusions