



Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Assessment

Houses in Multiple Occupation Draft Supplementary Planning Document (March 2026)

1: Introduction

There is no legal requirement for Supplementary Planning Documents to be accompanied by Sustainability Appraisal. However, “in exceptional circumstances” there may be a requirement for SPDs to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) where it is considered likely that they may have a significant effect on the environment that has not already been assessed within the SEA of the local plan¹. A screening assessment has been undertaken to assess whether such an assessment is necessary.

2: SEA screening criteria and procedure

To assess whether an SEA is required, there is a requirement to undertake a screening assessment, based on a standard set of criteria as set out in the Regulations, to determine whether the draft SPD is likely to have significant environmental effects. The screening must then be subject to consultation with the three statutory bodies Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. Following consultation, the results of the screening process must be detailed in a publicly available statement.

The consultation with the three statutory bodies is to be undertaken between 19th February and 12th March 2026. Two responses were received within the consultation period with response summarised below:

- **Natural England-** the topic of the Supplementary Planning Document does not appear to relate to our interests to any significant extent. We therefore do not wish to comment. Natural England does agree with your conclusion that it does not require an SEA / HRA. Should the plan be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment, then, please consult Natural England again.
- **Historic England-** given the nature of the draft SPD we would concur with your assessment that the SPD is unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects. We accept the SPD is intended to provide clarity on the interpretation of policies within the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan which has already been subject to a SA/SEA. As a result, we would endorse the Local Planning Authority's conclusions.

3: SEA screening assessment

The table outlined within Appendix 1 sets out the Council's assessment of whether significant environmental effects are likely and is based on the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

4: Conclusions

As a result of the assessment carried out in Appendix 1, it is considered that it is unlikely that any significant environmental effects will arise because of the Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD.

Notably, the SPD does not propose any policies or allocations, instead offering clarity on the interpretation of policies within the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan and sets out guidance and good practice for planning applicants to enable the delivery of better planning outcomes. The SPD will not result in any significant new development; it simply provides additional guidance on proposals for HMOs.

The Council has therefore determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not necessary for the Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD.

However, it is important to note that this screening assessment is based on a draft version of the SPD. Consequently, if the content or purpose of the SPD should materially change then the SEA screening will need to be re-assessed and updated.

¹ Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 008, Reference ID: 11-008-20140306)

Appendix 1: Screening Assessment

Determining the likely significance of effects on the environment

Criteria	Assessment	Likely significant effect?	
1 Characteristics of the plan or programme			
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 SPD provides supplementary guidance to support the implementation of Local Plan policies (principally SD8 and H4). Whilst the SPD will establish a framework for the implementation of policies within the Local Plan it does not determine the detail of the framework i.e. it does not establish policy.	No
1b	The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The SPD adds further detail to existing policies within the Development Plan. It is not intended to influence other plans and programmes.	No
1c	The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The SPD is relevant in terms of promoting sustainable development as it ensures HMO proposals meet appropriate standards and seeks to reduce potential for negative impacts. Given the topics in the SPD, it is not likely that there would be any significant environmental effects arising from the SPD.	No
1d	Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	The SPD provides supplementary guidance to support the implementation of Local Plan policies aiming to ensure that appropriate standards for HMOs are met. It is not anticipated that there will be any environmental problems introduced because of the SPD.	No
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).	The SPD supplements Local Plan policies and seeks to ensure that appropriate waste management provision is made for HMOs. It is not likely that there would be any significant environmental effects arising from the SPD.	No
2 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected			
2a	The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	The anticipated effects are expected to be positive as the SPD will ensure that HMOs provide appropriate standards of accommodation and seeks to reduce potential for negative impacts. The duration of the effects will depend upon the long-term use of premises but could be considered permanent unless HMOs are subsequently converted to other uses. The frequency of effects will be	No

Criteria		Assessment	Likely significant effect?
		linked to the number of planning applications for HMOs that are submitted.	
2b	The cumulative nature of the effects.	Its implementation will assist in mitigating potential negative effects that may arise from development of HMOs.	No
2c	The trans-boundary nature of the effects.	The SPD is to be applied borough wide where HMO applications are received. However, no trans-boundary effects anticipated from the SPD owing to the nature of its content.	No
2d	The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents).	No risks identified as the SPD seeks to ensure suitable standards are met in applications for HMOs.	No
2e	The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The SPD will be applied to all HMO planning applications in the borough. Its effects will be more likely felt at a more local scale (i.e. street or neighbourhood level) but it would not result in any additional development than would otherwise be the case.	No
2f	<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii. exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or iii. intensive land-use 	<p>The SPD supplements the higher level Local Plan policies and will not in itself result in any additional development. The SPD will not give rise to any significant effects on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage. The SPD provides guidance on determination of planning applications for HMOs. It does not promote development which is likely to lead to environmental quality standards or limit values being exceeded.</p> <p>The SPD will not give rise to any significant effects because of the intensification of land use – it will not in itself result in any additional development. Any applications for development will be required to satisfy the relevant policies for the protection of the character of the area before permission is granted.</p>	No
2g	The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	The SPD will not give rise to any significant adverse effects on nearby protected areas or landscapes.	No