

Dacorum Borough Council Screening Opinion on the determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and European Directive 2001/42/EC for the Paradise Design Code Supplementary Planning Document

27TH FEBRUARY 2023

SUMMARY

Dacorum Borough Council (the 'Council') determines that the emerging Paradise Design Code Supplementary Planning Document does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

INTRODUCTION

1. This screening opinion determines whether or not the contents of the emerging Paradise Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC (the Directive) and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations).
2. Any land use plan or programme 'which sets the framework for future development consent of projects' must be screened according to a set of criteria from Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations. These criteria include exceptions for plans 'which determine the use of a small area at local level' or which only propose 'minor modifications to a plan', if it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
3. The initial screening opinion must be subject to consultation with Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England. The results of the screening process must be detailed in a Screening Statement, made available to the public.

THE SCREENING PROCESS

4. Using the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the Regulations, a Screening Opinion determines whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects.
5. The extract from 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' in Appendix 1 provides a flow diagram to demonstrate the SEA screening process.

6. Table 1 in Appendix 1 sets out the criteria from the Practical Guide, along with an assessment of the Paradise Design Code SPD against each criterion to ascertain whether a SEA is required.
7. Also part of the screening process is the Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening, which can be found in Appendix 2, and the assessment of likely significance of effects on the environment, which can be found in Appendix 3.
8. These two assessments feed into Table 1 and the SEA screening opinion.

PARADISE DESIGN CODE SPD

About the SPD

9. In April 2021, Dacorum Borough Council took part in phase 1 of the National Model Design Code testing programme, supported by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), to develop a design code to steer quality in emerging developments.
10. The Paradise and Wood Lane area was selected for the trial because the Council believed this area would benefit from a comprehensive design framework, due to the fragmented land ownership, and the active planning context within the site. The site is currently allocated in the Site Allocations DPD (site reference MU/3), which was adopted by the Council as part of the Local Plan for the Borough in 2017.
11. The Paradise Design Code SPD sets out a framework of design requirements for new development in the area, which are site-specific, clear and detailed. The SPD's purpose is to provide further detail on the policies within the adopted Local Plan for Dacorum, and the document does not introduce new planning policies or site allocations to the development plan. Once adopted, the Paradise Design Code SPD will become a material consideration when determining planning applications. It is expected to enhance the character of the local area and ensure future design quality of developments coming forward, by providing clarity about design expectations to applicants.
12. The introductory section of the SPD establishes the vision, objectives and key priorities for the area and explains how the code should be used. This section also provides a 'Regulatory Plan' (figure 1.6) and an 'Illustrative Masterplan' (figure 1.7) however it is not the intention of the SPD that applicants replicate these, the purpose is to demonstrate how the SPD's principles could be applied spatially.

13. The main body of the report is split into four key sections, these each provide design coding for movement, built form, identity and use on the site. The codes within the SPD specify both mandatory and discretionary elements. This approach reflects current best practice to ensure that a high standard of design will be secured, whilst offering applicants flexibility.
14. All relevant planning applications need to demonstrate that the code compliance checklist has been satisfied prior to permission being granted.

Policy provision for the SPD

15. The Paradise Design Code SPD will support and complement the policies within the adopted development plan for Dacorum, by providing detailed design guidance on site-specific matters.
16. The policy provision for the SPD is established in Policy CS11 of the Dacorum Core Strategy (2013), which states 'The quality of neighbourhood design in towns and large villages will be reinforced through a Supplementary Planning Document on Urban Design'.
17. In 2021 the Council adopted the Dacorum Strategic Design Guide (DSDG) SPD. This SPD sets the overarching design process and principles all applicants' residential development and commercial premises should follow. As this SPD's scope is broad and Borough-wide, it makes provisions that 'DBC is in the process of preparing detailed guidance for other types of applications'. Therefore, the Paradise Design Code sits under the DSDG by providing detailed and site specific codes to support applications for mixed-use development on the Paradise and Wood Lane site.
18. When determining planning applications, schemes must be designed in accordance with current adopted policy, any other material considerations and a further understanding of technical constraints such as utilities, infrastructure and environmental protection.

Corporate Provision for the SPD

19. The Paradise Design Code SPD promotes the achievement of all the following corporate priorities¹ for Dacorum Borough Council, as set out below:
 - A clean, safe and enjoyable environment;
 - Building strong and vibrant communities;
 - Ensuring economic growth and prosperity;

¹ https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/council-democracy/corporate-plan-2020-2025.pdf?sfvrsn=ba6f089e_10

- Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need;
 - Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery; and
 - Climate and ecological emergency.
20. The vision, principles and codes for the area, as set out in the SPD, have been influenced by a contextual analysis of the wider town, and are informed by the pillars set out in the Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision.

RESPONSES

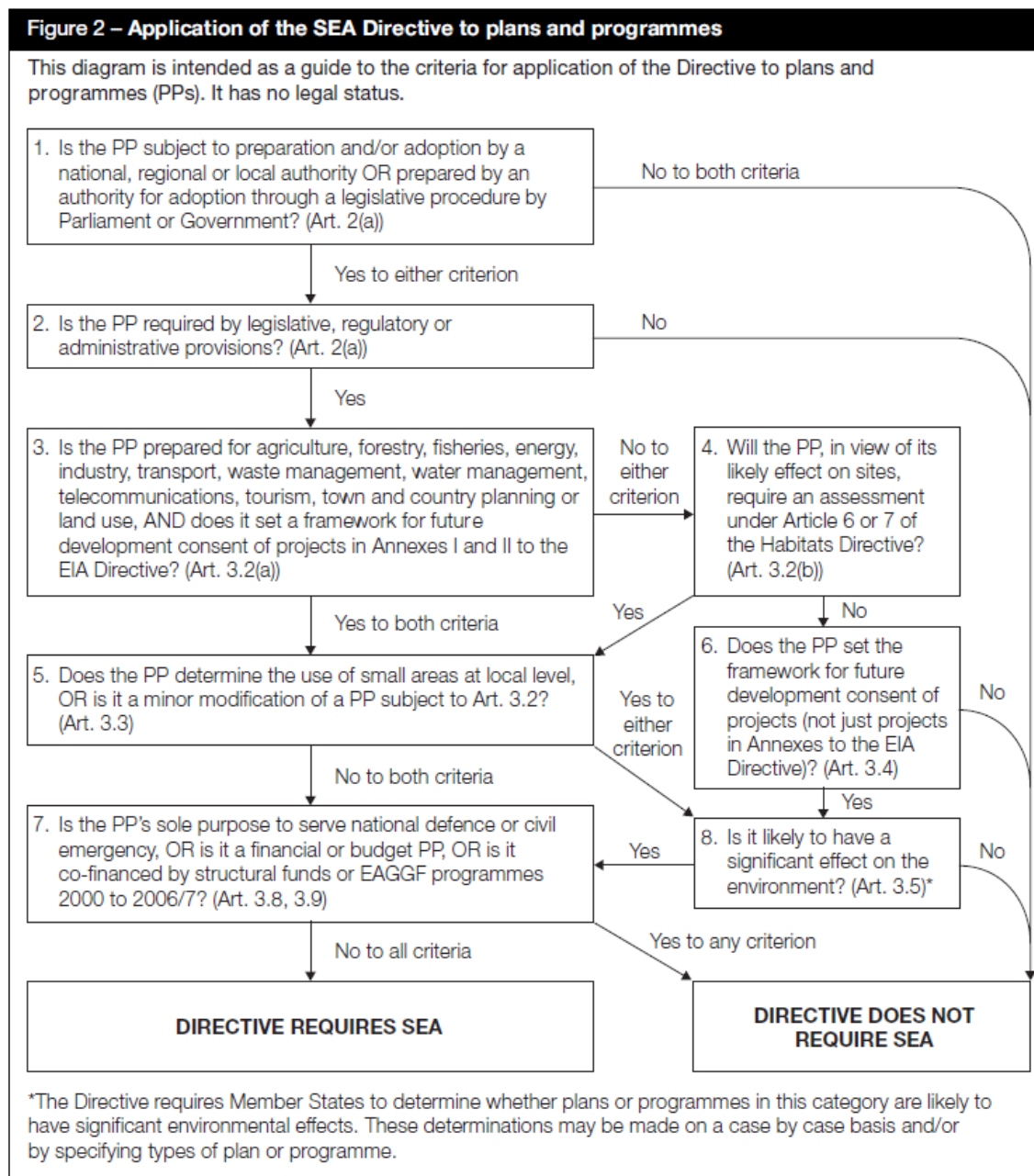
21. The Council consulted with the statutory consultees, the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England on the screening opinion from 31st January 2023 to the 27th February 2023. Responses were received from each of the three bodies and are attached as Appendix 4.
22. Historic England agreed with the Council's conclusion that neither an SEA nor an HRA would be required.
23. The Environment Agency confirmed their agreement with the findings of the Screening Opinion that a SEA will not be required for the SPD.
24. Natural England stated that they did not consider the SPD to pose any likely risk or opportunity in relation to their statutory purpose, and confirmed that they had no comments to make on the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

CONCLUSION

25. As a result of the screening undertaken by the Council, the following determination has been reached.
26. Based on the assessment presented in the Appendices, the Paradise Design Code SPD is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.
27. The Paradise Design Code SPD does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.
28. The Paradise Design Code SPD is unlikely to have significant effects on the National Sites Network, therefore an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Appendix 1 – Extract from ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’ (ODPM) (2005)²

Figure 1 – Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes



² Extract from [A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#), Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (September 2005)

Table 1: Assessment of the Paradise Design Code SPD against the SEA Directive

Stage	Y/N	Explanation
1. Is the Plan or Project 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))	Y	The preparation and adoption of the SPD by a local planning authority is allowed under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The process of preparing the Paradise Design Code SPD is in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012.
2. Is the Plan or Project required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	<p>The SPD is not a requirement under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, however, if adopted, it will build upon the policies in the adopted development plan, and it will be a material consideration when determining planning applications.</p> <p>It is therefore important that the screening process is precautionary and considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.</p>
3. Is the Plan or Project 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))	N	<p>The SPD has been prepared for the purposes of town and country planning. It builds on the policies in the adopted Development Plan, by providing detailed design requirements for the Paradise and Wood Lane Site (MU/3). It does not introduce new planning policies or site allocations to the development plan.</p> <p>The SPD does not set a framework for future development consents of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive.</p>
4. Will the Plan or Project, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under	N	The Paradise Design Code SPD is unlikely to have significant effects on the National Sites Network. See Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Paradise Design Code SPD in Appendix 2.

Stage	Y/N	Explanation
Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))		
6. Does the Plan or Project set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Y	Once adopted, the SPD will become a material consideration in the determination of future development consent of planning applications.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	<p>The principle of development on the site has already been established in the Site Allocations DPD in 2017, which was subject to comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating SEA. The SPD builds on the policies within the adopted Development Plan and does not create new policies.</p> <p>Therefore the Paradise Design Code SPD is considered to have no significant effect on the environment.</p>

Appendix 2 - Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for the Paradise Design Code SPD

INTRODUCTION

1. This screening report has been prepared to determine whether the Paradise Design Code SPD should be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).
2. National sites provide valuable ecological infrastructure for the protection of rare, endangered and/or vulnerable natural habitats and species of exceptional importance within the European Union.
3. These sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), designated under European Directive 92/43/EEC³ on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive), and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), classified under European Directive 2009/147/EC⁴ on the conservation of wild birds (the Birds Directive).
4. Additionally, paragraph 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that sites listed under the Ramsar Convention are to be given the same protection as fully designated National sites.
5. HRA is the process by which potential effects of a plan or project on the conservation objectives of European sites designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives are assessed.
6. The application of HRA to land-use plans is a requirement of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, the UK's transposition of European Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive).

PARADISE DESIGN CODE SPD

About the SPD

7. In April 2021, Dacorum Borough Council took part in phase 1 of the National Model Design Code testing programme, supported by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), to develop a design code to steer quality in emerging developments.
8. The Paradise and Wood Lane area was selected for the trial because the Council believed this area would benefit from a comprehensive design framework, due to the fragmented land ownership, and the active planning context within the site. The site is currently allocated in the Site Allocations

³ [Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora](#)

⁴ [Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds](#)

DPD (site reference MU/3), which was adopted by the Council as part of the Local Plan for the Borough in 2017.

9. The Paradise Design Code SPD sets out a framework of design requirements for new development in the area, which are site-specific, clear and detailed. The SPD's purpose is to provide further detail on the policies within the adopted Local Plan for Dacorum, and the document does not introduce new planning policies or site allocations to the development plan. Once adopted, the Paradise Design Code SPD will become a material consideration when determining planning applications. It is expected to enhance the character of the local area and ensure future design quality of developments coming forward, by providing clarity about design expectations to applicants.
10. The introductory section of the SPD establishes the vision, objectives and key priorities for the area and explains how the code should be used. This section also provides a 'Regulatory Plan' (figure 1.6) and an 'Illustrative Masterplan' (figure 1.7) however it is not the intention of the SPD that applicants replicate these, the purpose is to demonstrate how the SPD's principles could be applied spatially.
11. The main body of the report is split into four key sections, these each provide design coding for movement, built form, identity and use on the site. The codes within the SPD specify both mandatory and discretionary elements. This approach reflects current best practice to ensure that a high standard of design will be secured, whilst offering applicants flexibility.
12. All relevant planning applications need to demonstrate that the code compliance checklist has been satisfied prior to permission being granted.

Policy Provision for the SPD

13. The Paradise Design Code SPD will support and complement the policies within the adopted development plan for Dacorum, by providing detailed design guidance on site-specific matters.
14. The policy provision for the SPD is established in Policy CS11 of the Dacorum Core Strategy (2013), which states 'The quality of neighbourhood design in towns and large villages will be reinforced through a Supplementary Planning Document on Urban Design'.
15. In 2021 the Council adopted the Dacorum Strategic Design Guide (DSDG) SPD. This SPD sets the overarching design process and principles all applicants' residential development and commercial premises should follow. As this SPD's scope is broad and Borough-wide, it makes provisions that 'DBC is in the process of preparing detailed guidance for other types of applications'. Therefore, the Paradise Design Code sits under the DSDG by providing detailed and site specific codes to support applications for mixed-use development on the Paradise and Wood Lane site.

16. When determining planning applications, schemes must be designed in accordance with current adopted policy, any other material considerations and a further understanding of technical constraints such as utilities, infrastructure and environmental protection.

Corporate Provision for the SPD

17. The Paradise Design Code SPD promotes the achievement of all the following corporate priorities⁵ for Dacorum Borough Council, as set out below:

- A clean, safe and enjoyable environment;
- Building strong and vibrant communities;
- Ensuring economic growth and prosperity;
- Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need;
- Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery; and
- Climate and ecological emergency.

18. The vision, principles and codes for the area, as set out in the SPD, have been influenced by a contextual analysis of the wider town, and are informed by the pillars set out in the Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision.

HRA SCREENING

Methodology

19. The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, produced by David Tyldesley Associates (referred to hereafter as the 'DTA Handbook'), provides an industry recognised good practice approach to HRA. The DTA Handbook, and in particular 'Practical Guidance for the Assessment of Plans under the Regulations', which forms part F, has been used to prepare this screening report.

20. A step-by-step approach has been used to determine whether the SPD should be exempted, excluded or eliminated from further assessment for its effects on any National site. The step-wise approach, as outlined in the DTA Handbook, is illustrated in Figure 2⁶ below.

⁵ https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/council-democracy/corporate-plan-2020-2025.pdf?sfvrsn=ba6f089e_10

⁶ Extract from *The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook*, www.dtapublications.co.uk
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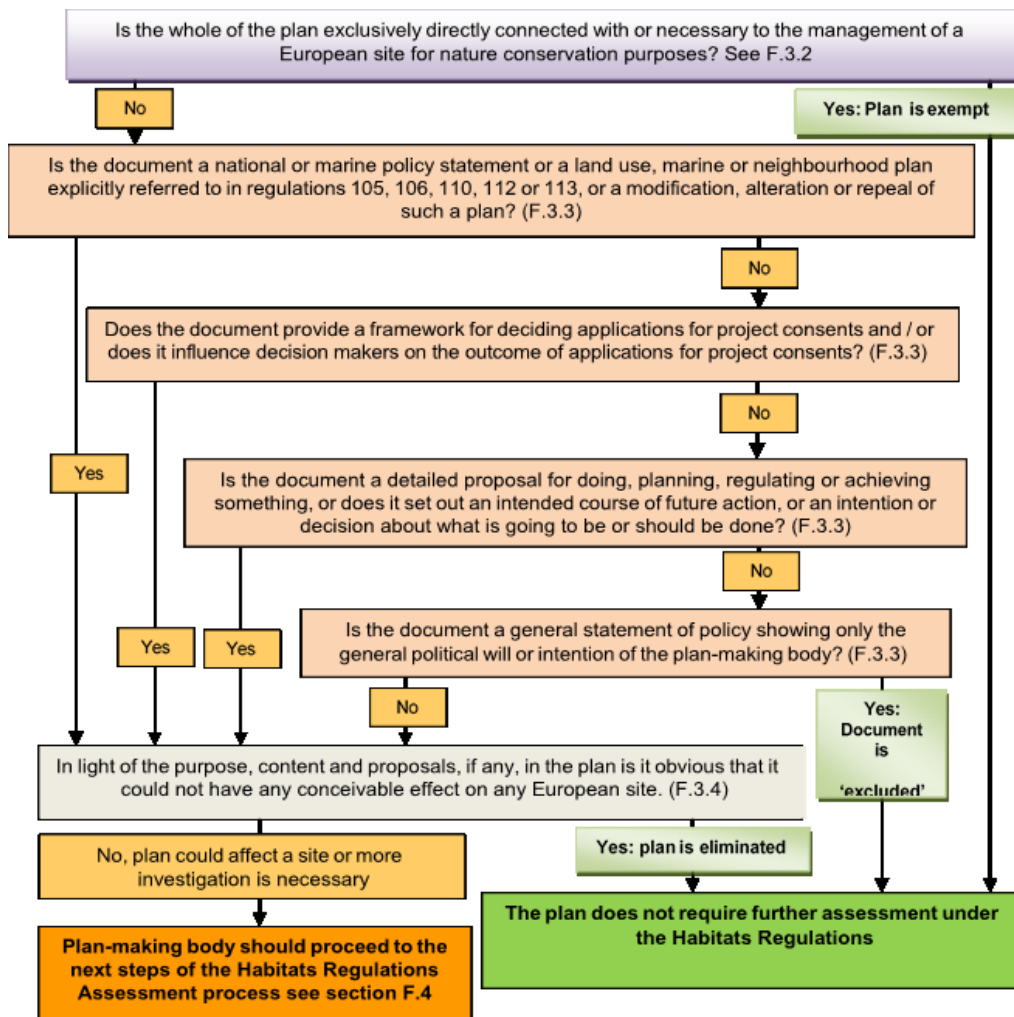


Figure 2: Deciding if a plan is exempt, excluded or eliminated from further assessment under the Habitats Regulations

Screening

21. For a plan to be exempt from assessment, the whole of the plan must be exclusively directly connected with or necessary to the management of the National site(s) potentially affected.
22. As the Paradise Design Code SPD is not directly connected with the management of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) it is not exempt from the HRA assessment process.
23. A plan may be excluded from the assessment process if it is not a plan under the scope of the Regulations. The application of HRA to land-use plans is a requirement of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
24. As the Paradise Design Code SPD will become a material consideration when deciding applications for planning permission, it is arguable that it does influence decision makers on the outcome of a project. Therefore, the SPD will proceed to the next step and be considered for elimination.

25. As the SPD cannot be excluded it is necessary to determine whether it can be eliminated from further assessment on the basis that when considering the purpose, content and proposals of the document, it is obvious that it could not have any conceivable effect on any National site. This has been undertaken using a 5 step criteria approach as set out below:

Step 1: The whole plan is a general policy statement, or a plan that expresses only a general political will or aspiration, or a general intention of the public body

OR

Step 2: The whole of the plan is about design, layout, timing, phasing, or other management or delivery of development or other change provided for or promoted by another plan already subject to HRA and which has been found not to have any significant effect on any National site, without relying on mitigation measures

OR

Step 3: The whole of the plan is about the requirement to provide mitigation measures to ensure that proposals in another plan cannot have an adverse effect on the integrity of any National site

OR

Step 4: The whole plan is a combination of proposals that meet criteria 1, 2 and/or 3 above

AND

Step 5: It is not possible to identify any credible evidence of any adverse effect on a National site in the plan area or elsewhere.

26. The Paradise Design Code SPD meets the criteria for Step 2 in that its principle purpose is to supplement the policies in the existing development plan with further detail, and is concerned with matters relating to the design of development.

27. The provisions of the SPD will be delivered through the planning application process. All planning applications will be required to consider the guidance in the SPD alongside adopted planning policy, any other material considerations and a further understanding of technical constraints such as utilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, all planning applications are subject to the requirements as detailed in the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Mitigation Strategy.

28. On the 15th November 2022, Cabinet approved the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Mitigation Strategy⁷. This strategy sets out targeted measures to protect the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (CBSAC) and to accommodate the predicted pressures associated with future growth.
29. All qualifying development⁸ will be required to pay a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMMS) tariff per dwelling, **and** will also be required to either contribute to an existing Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) or provide a bespoke solution (dependant on thresholds).

RESPONSES

30. The Council consulted with the statutory consultees, the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England on the screening opinion from 31st January 2023 to the 27th February 2023. Responses were received from each of the three bodies and are attached as Appendix 4.
31. Historic England agreed with the Council's conclusion that neither an SEA nor an HRA would be required.
32. The Environment Agency confirmed their agreement with the findings of the Screening Opinion that a SEA will not be required for the SPD.
33. Natural England stated that they did not consider the SPD to pose any likely risk or opportunity in relation to their statutory purpose, and confirmed that they had no comments to make on the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

CONCLUSION

34. The Paradise Design Code SPD has been considered in light of the assessment requirements of 63/105 of the Habitats Regulations. It is concluded that the Paradise Design Code SPD can be eliminated from further assessment in the HRA process because, when considering the purpose, content and proposals of the SPD, it is obvious that it could not have a conceivable effect on a National site.

⁷ [https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/new-single-local-plan/chilterns-beechwoods-special-area-of-conservation/chilterns-beechwoods-special-area-of-conservation-\(sac\)---mitigation-strategy](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/new-single-local-plan/chilterns-beechwoods-special-area-of-conservation/chilterns-beechwoods-special-area-of-conservation-(sac)---mitigation-strategy)

⁸ All proposals which seek to deliver a net increase in dwellings located within the 12.6km zone of influence are considered to be 'qualifying development', as set out in page 20, paragraph 3.2.16 & page 23, paragraph 3.2.34 of the Mitigation Strategy

Zone of influence interactive map:

<https://dacorumbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=a59b90f9d66f44828d802b867e6c4276>

Appendix 3 - Assessment of the likely significance of effects on the environment

The criteria below is taken from Annex II of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Schedule I of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations.

Table 2: Schedule 1 of the SEA Directive (1) Characteristic of the SPD having particular regard to:

<p>(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.</p>	<p>The Paradise Design Code SPD does not contain any land use policies and only serves to provide guidance to the policies of the adopted development plan, namely Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy (2013). Furthermore, the principle of development on the MU/3 site has already been established by the Site Allocations DPD once it was adopted in 2017. Both development plan documents have been subject to comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating SEA.</p> <p>The SPD provides more detail on the policies and principles established in the Dacorum Development Plan, and primarily relates to detailed design matters.</p>
<p>(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.</p>	<p>The purpose of the SPD is to supplement the policies within the Development Plan, and it does not form part of the development plan when adopted. The policy provision for the SPD also takes into account the Dacorum Strategic Design Guide (DSDG) SPD (adopted 2021). The Paradise Design Code supplements the broad, Borough-wide principles established by the DSDG with detailed, site specific, guidance for the Paradise and Wood Lane area (site MU/3, Site Allocations DPD 2017).</p> <p>During any application for planning permission on the site, the proposal will be required to comply with national and local policy/guidance, and a further understanding of technical constraints will be required.</p>

<p>(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	<p>The Paradise Design Code SPD is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects as a result of this criteria. Policies addressing environmental considerations are included at a more detailed level with the Development Plan, and the Dacorum Strategic Design Guide SPD. An assessment of environmental considerations on the site will be undertaken during the relevant planning application stage, as they will be subject to detailed design and technical input.</p> <p>It is expected that the Paradise Design Code SPD will result in positive effects by delivering and improving green and blue infrastructure on site, the provision of sustainable design features, and the enhancement of the natural environment to benefit the local community.</p> <p>Following advice from national bodies, the lead local flood and ecology authority and local utilities providers, an objective regarding addressing the Climate Crisis through design has been added to the built form section of the SPD, and further codes have been added relating to measures to increase biodiversity and maximise water attenuation/capture through design, alongside a code specifying a buffer zone to the local wildlife site.</p>
<p>(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.</p>	<p>Providing further detailed guidance to the existing policies of the adopted Dacorum Core Strategy (2013) is unlikely to exacerbate environmental problems, indeed it is likely to reduce environmental problems through the consistent application of guidance promoting environmental consideration at the design stage of a proposal.</p> <p>Any environmental problems relating to specific proposals will be considered during the relevant planning application stage.</p>

<p>(e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</p>	<p>The greater consideration of delivering and improving green and blue infrastructure on site, the provision of sustainable design features and the enhancement of the natural environment to benefit the local community are unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects as a result of this criteria.</p> <p>The Paradise Design Code SPD is judged not to have an impact on Community legislation.</p> <p>The Development Plan for Dacorum contains policies relating to the implementation of Community legislation on the environment, these include:</p> <p>Dacorum Borough Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Core Strategy (adopted 2013) • Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 Written Statement (adopted 2004) <p>Hertfordshire County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016 (adopted 2007) • Mineral Consultation Areas in Hertfordshire Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted 2007) • Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) 2011-2026 (adopted 2012) • Waste Site Allocations DPD 2011-2026 (adopted 2014) • Employment Land Areas of Search SPD (adopted 2015)
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Table 3: Schedule 1 of the SEA Directive (2) Characteristics of the effects and area likely to be affected having particular regard to:

<p>(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.</p>	<p>The Paradise Design Code SPD is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects as a result of this criteria. The Paradise Design Code SPD elaborates on the policies set out in the adopted Dacorum Core Strategy (2013) and sets out how development can achieve them. It does not in itself present any policies and serves only to provide greater clarity and guidance.</p> <p>Any effects on the environment caused by specific proposals on the site should be identified and considered at the relevant planning application stage.</p>
<p>(b) The cumulative nature of the effects.</p>	<p>The Paradise Design Code SPD is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects as a result of this criteria. The Paradise Design Code SPD elaborates on the policies set out in the adopted Dacorum Core Strategy (2013) and sets out how development can achieve them. It does not in itself present any policies and serves only to provide greater clarity and guidance.</p> <p>By providing guidance, this will ensure a consistent application of high standards of design for proposals in the area. This will have a cumulative positive effect over time as proposals are required to follow the same framework, which takes sustainability into account.</p>
<p>(c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects.</p>	<p>The Paradise Design Code SPD is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects as a result of this criteria. The Paradise Design Code SPD elaborates on the policies set out in the adopted Dacorum Core Strategy (2013) and sets out how development can achieve them. It does not in itself present any policies and serves only to provide greater clarity and guidance.</p>

<p>(d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents).</p>	<p>The Paradise Design Code SPD is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects as a result of this criteria.</p> <p>No risks to human health or the environment have been identified as an effect of the SPD. The SPD is expected to improve the quality of design and living standards for new and existing occupants of the site. A community impact assessment has been prepared and will be updated prior to the SPD being adopted by the Council.</p>
<p>(e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</p>	<p>The Paradise Design SPD is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects as a result of this criteria. The SPD will apply to developments on the MU/3 site, within the administrative area of Dacorum Borough Council. This site is currently home to a mixture of business and residential uses, and is not subject to national designations and protection which have been considered. This site does not fall within the zone of influence of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC at Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI and Tring Woodlands SSSI.</p> <p>There is evidence that additional residential development within Dacorum is likely to give rise to increased recreational pressures on the site. A Mitigation Strategy has been prepared to ensure any new development, subject to the necessary mitigation, will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.</p> <p>The Paradise Design Code SPD relates to detailed design matters relating to movement, built form, identity and land uses for proposals within the MU/3 area, therefore the geographical area, and populations affected are small.</p>

<p>(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ○ Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or ○ Intensive land-use. 	<p>The Paradise Design Code SPD is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects as a result of this criteria. The SPD will apply to developments on the MU/3 site, within the administrative area of Dacorum Borough Council. This site is currently home to a mixture of business and residential uses, and is not subject to national designations and protection which have been considered. This site does not fall within the zone of influence of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC at Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI and Tring Woodlands SSSI.</p> <p>There is evidence that additional residential development within Dacorum is likely to give rise to increased recreational pressures on the site. A Mitigation Strategy has been prepared to ensure any new development, subject to the necessary mitigation, will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.</p> <p>The Paradise Design Code SPD elaborates on the policies set out in the adopted Dacorum Core Strategy (2013) and sets out how development can achieve them. Matters relating to environmental standards and land use are contained in the Development Plan for Dacorum. It is not anticipated to adversely affect any special natural characteristic or cultural heritage, and it does not in itself present any policies or directly influence the use of land in Dacorum.</p>
<p>(g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.</p>	<p>The Paradise Design Code SPD is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects on landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status. Proposals on the site will need to comply with policies in the development plan, and the mitigation strategy.</p>

Appendix 4 – Consultation responses to screening

Natural England – Response Received 09/02/2023

Dear Sir/Madam

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England does not consider that this Paradise Design Code Supplementary Planning Document – consultation on screening for Strategic Environment Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment poses any likely risk or opportunity in relation to our statutory purpose, and so does not wish to comment on this consultation.

The lack of comment from Natural England should not be interpreted as a statement that there are no impacts on the natural environment. Other bodies and individuals may wish to make comments that might help the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to fully take account of any environmental risks and opportunities relating to this document.

If you disagree with our assessment of this proposal as low risk, or should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment, then in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, please consult Natural England again.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Dean
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Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 6GJ

Tel: 0300 060 3900

Email: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

www.gov.uk/natural-england



Environment Agency Response Received 24/02/2023

Thank you for your email. We agree with Dacorum Borough Council that the emerging Paradise Design Code Supplementary Planning Document does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Please let me know if you have any questions.
Kind regards
Deborah

Deborah Simons

Planning Advisor, Hertfordshire and North London Sustainable Places

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Historic England Response Received 27/02/20

RE: Consultation on screening for Strategic Environment Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment: Paradise Design Code SPD

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the screening for SEA and HRA for the Paradise Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). I can confirm that we support the conclusion that that neither an SEA nor an HRA would be required. I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this email.

Best wishes,

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