



# Sustainability Assessment (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Statement for the Draft Dartmoor Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

February 2023

## 1 Legislative background and purpose of Strategic Environment Assessments and Sustainability Appraisals

1.1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisals are strategic assessments undertaken during preparation of plans or programmes:

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA):** a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of local plans and spatial development strategies. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):** a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of local plans and spatial development strategies to provide a high level of protection to the environment and contribute to integrating environmental considerations into the preparation, adoption and implementation of plans and programmes to promote sustainable development. In England SAs incorporate SEAs, through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (commonly referred to as the 'Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations').

1.1.2 The requirement for a SEA is set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, which implements the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>1</sup>. Article 3 sets out the types of plans which require an environmental assessment, which includes those that set the framework for future development consent. Article 3 provides an exemption and states that an environmental assessment need not be carried out:

- a) for a plan or programme which determines the use of a small area at local level; or
- b) for a minor modification to a plan or programme, unless it has been determined that the plan, programme or modification is likely to have significant environmental effects.

1.1.3 Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local authorities to undertake a SA for Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. However the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 removes the automatic need for an SA of SPDs. This is because SPDs do

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<sup>1</sup> [Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment](#)

not normally introduce new policies or proposals, or modify development plan documents which have already been subject to SA. National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>2</sup> confirms that SPDs do not require a SA, but may in exceptional circumstances require an SEA if they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been assessed during the preparation of the Local Plan.

- 1.1.4 The Dartmoor Local Plan underwent SA and SEA at each relevant stage of its preparation and is of relevance to the Dartmoor Housing SPD. The SAs and SEAs for the Local Plan are available on [our website](#)<sup>3</sup>. The Local Plan was adopted by the Authority in December 2021.

## **2 Dartmoor Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

- 2.1.1 The Dartmoor Housing SPD provides additional guidance to support the housing policies of the Local Plan. The SPD:

- provides detailed guidance on how to use Local Plan housing policies;
- clarifies the Authority's expectations of housing development in Dartmoor National Park;
- helps applicants make successful and streamlined planning applications which are good for Dartmoor and its communities; and
- helps ensure the Authority makes consistent, robust and streamlined decisions on planning applications.

- 2.1.2 This Housing SPD sits alongside the Dartmoor Local Plan 2018 – 2036, adopted in 2021 and which comprises the 'Development Plan' for the National Park. Together with the Local Plan, this SPD will form a material planning consideration when we decide planning applications. It replaces the 2014 Affordable Housing SPD.

## **3 SA and SEA Screening**

- 3.1.1 This report provides a Screening Statement on the Dartmoor Housing SPD. It sets out the result of SEA screening to date; responses from consultation bodies; determination of significant effects and; reason an SEA and SA is not required.

### *3.2 SA Screening*

- 3.2.1 As above, the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 removes the automatic need for an SA of SPDs. The Dartmoor Housing SPD does not introduce new policies or proposals, or modify development plan documents which have already been subject to SA. The SPD only provides guidance to support delivery of the Local Plan's housing policies, aiding interpretation and providing clarity. It is therefore considered an SA is not required.

### *3.3 SEA Screening*

- 3.3.1 With regards SEA, the Responsible Authority (Dartmoor National Park Authority) must determine whether a plan or programme under assessment is likely to have significant environmental effects. If the SPD is considered unlikely to have significant environmental

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<sup>2</sup> [Planning Practice Guidance \(Plan-making\) Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 61-008-20190315 Revision date: 15 03 2019](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/living-and-working/planning/planning-policy/background-evidence/sustainability-appraisal-strategic-environmental-assessment-sasea>

effects through the screening process, then an SEA is not necessary. The assessment must be made taking account of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, and in consultation with the Environmental Agency, Historic England and Natural England. Table 1, below, provides an assessment of all Schedule 1 criteria, and concludes an SEA is not required.

3.3.2 Dartmoor National Park Authority consulted with the above consultation bodies in January 2023 as part of the first public consultation on the Housing SPD from 6<sup>th</sup> February to 27<sup>th</sup> March. If having consulted these bodies and undertaken this assessment the Authority considers that the SPD is likely to have significant environmental effects, then an SEA would be required.

Table 1: Assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment

| Criteria for determining likely significance of effects on the environment <sup>4</sup>  | Significant environmental effect? | Dartmoor National Park Authority Reasoning   |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>1. Characteristics of the Dartmoor Housing SPD</b>  |                                   |  |
| (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 | No                                | The Draft Housing SPD provides more detail to the development framework established within the Dartmoor Local Plan 2018 - 2036, already subject to SA incorporating SEA. The purpose of the Housing SPD is to provide guidance and clarity to support delivery of the development framework set out in the Dartmoor Local Plan. The housing SPD does not add to or modify the development framework in the Local Plan. |
| (b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;  | No                                | The Draft Housing SPD relates solely to the Dartmoor Local Plan 2018 – 2036. Its status is beneath the Local Plan in the development plan hierarchy, and it must be entirely consistent with the Local Plan. The Draft Housing SPD does not seek to influence plans.   |
| (c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development  | No                                | The Draft Housing SPD does not relate to environmental considerations. Environmental issues are addressed by the policies of the Local Plan.   |
| (d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme   | No                                | The Draft Housing SPD does not introduce or modify a development framework. It provides guidance for delivering the framework in the Local Plan, in relation to housing. Potential environmental problems with that framework are addressed in the Local Plan, it's supporting evidence and SA/SEA.  |
| (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).      | No                                | The Draft Housing SPD will not impact on the implementation of community legislation on the environment.   |
| <b>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to</b>   |                                   |  |
| (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects  | No                                | The Draft Housing SPD will have no impact on the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of development in the National Park  |

<sup>4</sup> [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations \(2004\) Schedule 1: Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment](#)

|   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| (b) the cumulative nature of the effects  | No | The Draft Housing SPD will have no impact on the cumulative effects of development in the National Park.   |
| (c) the transboundary nature of the effects   | No | The Draft Housing SPD only relates to the Dartmoor Local Plan 2018 – 2036, it does not affect development frameworks outside the National Park boundary.   |
| (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)  | No | The Draft Housing SPD does not in itself or its guidance pose a risk to human health or the environment  |
| (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)  | No | The Draft Housing SPD provides guidance for delivery of the development framework established within the Dartmoor Local Plan 2018 - 2036, already subject to SA incorporating SEA. The housing SPD does not add to or modify the development framework in the Local Plan and as such will not have any effect on the area.   |
| (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—<br>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;<br>(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or<br>(iii) intensive land-use | No | While the National Park is an area of high environmental value and vulnerability, the Draft Housing SPD provides only guidance for delivery of the development framework established within the Dartmoor Local Plan 2018 - 2036, already subject to SA incorporating SEA. The housing SPD does not add to or modify the development framework in the Local Plan and as such will not have any effect on the National Park. |
| (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.  | No | While the National Park is an area of national landscape importance, the Draft Housing SPD provides only guidance for delivery of the development framework established within the Dartmoor Local Plan 2018 - 2036, already subject to SA incorporating SEA. The housing SPD does not add to or modify the development framework in the Local Plan and as such will not have any effect on the National Park.              |