



North West Preston Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document

Screening Report

**for Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
and
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

March 2017

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. Preston City Council is seeking to adopt the North West Preston Masterplan (NWPM) as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to supplement Policy MD2: North West Preston, of the adopted Preston Local Plan (APLP) (Site Allocations and Development Management Policies) 2012-26.
2. Whilst the Planning Act 2008 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 removed the mandatory requirement for preparing a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for SPDs, local authorities are still required to screen SPDs to ensure that the legal requirements for SA are met where there are impacts that have not been covered in the SA of the parent plan (the APLP) or where a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under the SEA Directive.
3. The SEA Directive 2001/42/EC identifies the purpose of SEA as “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” (SEA Directive 2001/EC/42).
4. The SEA Directive is transposed into UK law under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (EAPPR) 2004. To determine whether an SEA is required, local authorities are required to screen SPDs for significant environmental effects. The criteria for determining the significance of effects are taken from Schedule 1 Regulation 9 (2) (a) and 10 (4) (a) of the EAPPR 2004 and can be split into criteria related to (i) the scope and influence of the document, and (ii) the type of impact and area likely to be affected. The regulations specify that prior to adoption of the SPD, the Council has a statutory duty to consult with specified bodies (Natural England, English Heritage, and the Environment Agency) during the screening process.
5. This screening report has been prepared in support of the SPD to establish whether there are impacts arising from the SPD that have not been covered in the higher level SA of the APLP, and whether there are likely to be any significant environmental effects that would require an SA/SEA.

B. OVERVIEW OF THE SPD

6. The purpose of the SPD is to assist developers in the preparation and submission of planning applications in the North West Preston strategic location. Whilst Policy 1 of the adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy (CS) identified the area as a strategic location for growth, the key policy hook which has prompted the Council to seek adoption of the Masterplan as an SPD is Policy MD2 of the APLP which was adopted in July 2015 and which sets out the specific criteria to be considered in the assessment of development proposals in the area. Policy MD2 identifies the key infrastructure required, including an East West Link Road, local centres, community uses, schools, and green infrastructure.
7. The SPD supplements APLP Policy MD2 by providing additional indicative guidance setting out how the Council would like to see its vision for the area, as set out in Policy MD2, implemented. Given the scale of development and the lengthy timescales involved, the SPD is a fluid document which provides an indicative framework for development and general design principles. The SPD will therefore assist in the delivery of the co-ordinated and comprehensive development of North West Preston including the required infrastructure as set out in Policy MD2. It will not in itself introduce any new policies or allocate land and it will not form part of the statutory development plan. However once adopted, the SPD will be afforded significant weight as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the area.

8. A previous version of the Masterplan was approved as guidance by the City Council in February 2014. This has been updated and condensed. Whilst still providing the overarching general indicative framework map and design principles for the area, in addition to the masterplan the SPD also includes a further layer of indicative detail in the form of more detailed and site specific indicative design guidance for all development along the East West Link Road, and further guidance in relation to strategic green space. The Masterplan is therefore just one document within a suite of documents that make up the NW Preston Masterplan SPD. An overarching statement sets out the context for the SPD and links all the sub-documents together.

C. SCREENING OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR A SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA)

9. Whilst there is no statutory reason to undertake an SA for SPDs, the Council has still considered whether an SA is required. The APLP (adopted July 2015) was subject to an SA during its production in July 2013. Each policy, including MD2, was assessed against a number of social, environmental and economic sustainability objectives. A 2014 addendum to the SA included an assessment of the NW Preston Masterplan as approved by the Council as planning guidance in February 2014.
10. **Table 1** below summarises the SA of Policy MD2 (including the 2014 addendum) and identifies whether the adoption of the NW Preston Masterplan SPD is likely to result in any additional impacts on sustainability objectives.

Table 1: Summary of SA of APLP Policy MD2 and assessment of additional impacts

Associated Policy	Summary of SA of relevant APLP Policy (including 2014 addendum)			Summary of assessment of effects	Will the SPD further impact on SA objectives?
	Social Effects	Environmental Effects	Economic Effects		
Adopted Preston Local Plan (APLP) 2012 -2026 Policy MD2: North West Preston	Short term + Medium term + Long term ++	Short term 0 Medium term 0 Long term 0	Short term + Medium term + Long term +	<p><u>Social</u> Policy will have a major positive social effect in the long term. Development of the strategic site will deliver infrastructure that will benefit the whole city and will provide much needed high quality housing, including affordable housing.</p> <p>Development of the site will deliver the necessary infrastructure and the existing road networks would improve with less congestion and access to sustainable transport modes [The 2014 addendum to the SA notes that the NW Preston Masterplan potentially improves this further, but on balance there is no alteration to the 2013 findings given the new infrastructure could encourage more road users].</p> <p><u>Environmental</u> Policy will have a neutral effect. Development of the site will result in the loss of greenfield land, which is not the most optimum use of existing resources and may lead to increased risk of surface flooding [The 2014 addendum re-affirms this].</p> <p><u>Economic</u> This policy will have a minor positive effect. Development of the site, along with delivery of the associated infrastructure may lead to an increase in economic activity in the area and improve employment opportunities [The 2014 addendum re-affirms this].</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No.</p> <p>The SPD will not have any significant environmental, social or economic effects beyond those of the ADPLP Policy it supplements (Policy MD2). The SPD will not create new policies or allocate land and will provide additional guidance to the adopted policy contained within the parent DPD which was subject to a full SA in 2013 prior to adoption in 2015 (including a 2014 addendum to reflect the North West Preston Masterplan that was approved as guidance by the Council in 2014). The SPD supplements the adopted criteria of Policy MD2 and will not impact upon the sustainability objectives of the APLP.</p>

Conclusion of screening for SA

11. As demonstrated in Table 1 above, the Council has determined that the adoption of the SPD is unlikely to have any significant environmental, social, or economic effects beyond those of the policy it supplements (Policy MD2 of the APLP). Therefore it will not have any additional impacts on sustainability objectives that will require a further SA being carried out as a result of the SPD.
12. In coming to this conclusion the Council is mindful that the SPD will not create new policies or allocate land and serves only to expand on existing policy within its parent DPD (the APLP) which was subject to an SA and was found sound. The 2014 addendum to the SA for the APLP found Policy MD2 to have neutral environmental effects; minor economic effects; and major positive social effects in the long term. Although the NW Preston Masterplan has been updated again since 2014 (the Masterplan now forms just one document within a suite of indicative documents which make up the SPD) no new issues have been introduced that have not previously been assessed in the SA of the APLP.

D. SCREENING OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR A STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

13. Whilst SPDs do not statutorily require an SA, they may in exceptional circumstances still require an SEA if they are likely to have significant environmental effects. The EAPPR 2004 advises that an SEA is unlikely to be required where a SPD deals only with a small area at local level. Although the SA of the 2015 APLP included a detailed assessment of the environmental effects of Policy MD2, in order to meet the requirements of the EAPPR 2004 and the SEA Directive the City Council must still screen the SPD to determine whether there are likely to be any significant environmental effects arising from the SPD which would require an SEA in their own right.
14. The likelihood of significant environmental effects should be determined by a specified set of criteria as set out in Schedule 1 of the EAPPR 2004, in consultation with the Environment Agency, English Heritage (Historic England) and Natural England. Running alongside the statutory consultation period for the SPD, each of the aforementioned statutory consultees was consulted directly in relation to this screening report.
15. The responses received are summarised in **Table 2**, below.

Table 2: Statutory consultation: responses

Consultee	Response
Environment Agency response received 22 July 2016	<i>"We support the conclusions of the screening report and agree that the Sustainability Appraisal of the Adopted Preston Local Plan covers any issues in the SPD."</i>
Natural England response received 10 August 2016	<i>"Natural England has no further comment on the North West Preston Masterplan SPD and agrees with the conclusion of the screening report for the SPD."</i>
English Heritage (Historic England) response received	<i>"The area has already been screened for environmental impacts as part of the plan making process, Historic England has previously commented on this. Many of the housing allocation sites are already</i>

12 August 2016	<i>subject to planning permissions. From our meeting [04 August 2016] it did however appear that the line of the new road and aspects of the urban park (to be managed by the Land Trust) have changed and this may have implications for undesignated archaeology. I therefore recommend that you screen for any heritage/environmental impacts that may result from revisions made to the plan and to comment on any potential environmental impacts resulting from these changes in the screening document.”</i>
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16. The Draft July 2016 consultation version of this Screening Report has been updated to reflect the comments made by the statutory bodies (above). The City Council’s updated screening assessment of the likely significant effects of the SPD against the relevant criteria in Schedule 1 of the EAPPR 2004 is shown in **Table 3**, below (*with additional comments shown in italics*).

Table 3: Screening for Significant Environmental Effects in accordance with the SEA Directive

Criteria	Assessment of SPD against the criteria in Schedule 1 of the EAPPR 2004	Will the SPD have a significant environmental impact?
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular 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.	This SPD provides guidance on the application of policies which are defined in the adopted Preston Local Plan (ADPLP) regarding the North West Preston Strategic Location (NWPSL). The SPD will not set new policy or allocate new resources. It will provide a finer grain of guidance to Policy MD2 of the APLP but will not extend or broaden the application or purpose of the parent policy. The APLP has already been subject to a full SA, incorporating the requirements of SEA. An addendum to the SA included an additional assessment of Policy MD2 giving due regard to the content of the North West Preston Masterplan which was approved as guidance in 2014 (an earlier, but not materially different version of the current Masterplan).	No.
b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in the hierarchy.	This SPD sits at the lowest level in the hierarchy of planning policy documents and will provide supplementary guidance to assist in the delivery of the aspirations of APLP Policy MD2. It will be a material consideration in the decision making process but will not form part of the Development Plan for Preston. It will influence planning applications for sites within the NWPSL in line with Policy MD2 and other relevant policies, but it will not influence other plans and programmes.	No.
c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	This SPD provides guidance on the implementation of Policy MD2, which was prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)'s requirement for a presumption in favour of sustainable development and was subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating the requirements of SEA. The SPD will contribute positively to the integration of environmental considerations and promoting sustainable development. It will provide an indicative framework for development in the area as envisaged in Policy MD2.	No.
d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	There are no specific environmental problems that are relevant to adoption of the Masterplan as a SPD. Whilst the SA for the APLP acknowledged that the loss of greenfield land is not the most optimum use of existing resources and may lead to increased risk of surface flooding, the SA (including 2014 addendum) found neutral environmental effects. The SPD does not add anything to those issues which were assessed in the parent document. The SPD seeks to avoid biodiversity impacts, and where this is not possible,	No.

Criteria	Assessment of SPD against the criteria in Schedule 1 of the EAPPR 2004	Will the SPD have a significant environmental impact?
	provide suitable mitigation. SUDs principles will also be applied across the site.	
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).	The SPD seeks to provide further details to implementation of Policy MD2 of the APLP. Both the APLP and the SPD comply with the regulations.	No.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:		
a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	The proposed developments which will be influenced by the guidance in the SPD are likely to be in place for a number of decades. However the SPD only provides guidance on the implementation of APLP Policy MD2 and does not itself lead to development. Policy 1 of the adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy identifies the area as a Strategic Location for growth, and APLP Policy MD2 sets the criteria for development in the area. The SPD is unlikely to give rise to any significant effects on the environment beyond those identified in the SA of the APLP.	No.
b) The cumulative nature of the effects.	The SPD only provides guidance on the implementation of the APLP Policy MD2 and does not itself lead to development. The SPD is unlikely to result in significant effects beyond those identified in the SAs of the adopted Core Strategy and the APLP.	No.
c) The transboundary nature of the effects.	The SPD is unlikely to result in significant effects beyond those identified in the SAs of the adopted Core Strategy and the APLP.	No.
d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example due to accidents).	There are no perceived risks to human health arising from the SPD.	No.
e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	The geographical area (the North West Strategic location) and the size and scale of development (the number of houses and the required infrastructure) were established in the higher level SA's of the adopted Core Strategy and the APLP, and which were subject	No.

Criteria	Assessment of SPD against the criteria in Schedule 1 of the EAPPR 2004	Will the SPD have a significant environmental impact?
	to full SA's.	
<p>f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <p>i) Special nature characteristics or cultural heritage;</p> <p>ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</p> <p>iii) Intensive land use.</p>	<p>The SPD applies to development within the North West Preston strategic location only, which has already been considered appropriate for development in the adopted Core Strategy and APLP. The SPD will not give rise to any significant impacts other than those fully considered in the parent documents.</p> <p><i>The comments made by Historic England on 12 August 2016 (refer to Table 2, above) are noted. However the updated SPD will not give rise to any significant impacts other than those already fully considered in the parent documents and in the original area appraisal (Final Baseline Report by URS, dated August 2013).</i></p> <p><i>Section 3.3 and Appendix C of the Baseline Report provided a detailed assessment of the North West Preston strategic location. Whilst there are no designated archaeological assets in the North West Preston strategic location, there are a number of un-designated assets within the strategic location, and a designated monument (Cromwell's Mound) located just outside the area. For clarity, and to help guide new development proposals, all these assets will be identified in the final version of the Masterplan put forward for adoption as an SPD.</i></p>	No.
<p>g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>There are no landscapes of national or international recognition that will be affected by the SPD. Whilst North West Preston is greenfield land, the SPD will not give rise to any significant impacts other than those fully considered in the parent documents, which were subject to full SA's.</p>	No.

Conclusion of SEA screening

17. As demonstrated in the screening assessment in Table 3 (above) the Council has determined that the adoption of the NW Preston Masterplan SPD is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment since it only provides supplementary indicative guidance to how the Council would like to see the criteria of Policy MD2 of the APLP, adopted in 2015, implemented. It does not introduce any new policies or allocate land, and will not form part of the statutory development plan.
18. The SA for the APLP has already met the requirements of SEA in terms of procedure and scope. The SA of the APLP (with 2014 addendum) included the effects of the Masterplan approved as guidance by the Council in 2014, and demonstrated that Policy MD2 will have neutral environmental impacts in the short, medium and long term. The supporting indicative content of the SPD does not conflict with any of the criteria of APLP Policy MD2 or any other adopted policies and will not have any significant impacts that have not already been covered in the higher level SA of the APLP. It is therefore not considered necessary to carry out a further SEA for this SPD.

E. HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

19. The need for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is set out within Article 6 of the EC Habitats Directive 1992, and interpreted into British law by the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 (as amended in 2007). An assessment is required to be undertaken of the “likely significant effects” of a plan or project, on sites of international nature conservation importance.
20. Throughout their preparation the Core Strategy and the Local Plan have been subject to HRA. HRA screening concluded that neither of the documents (the CS or the APLP) would have a significant impact on any European site and that no further assessment was needed. As such all the policies could be “screened out” and it was not necessary to move to the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.
21. Given the SPD does not lead to any development itself, and serves only to provide indicative guidance to achieve the aims of Policy MD2 of the APLP, the SPD is unlikely to have any significant effects above or beyond those considered in the assessment of the parent plans. The SPD will not therefore trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment.

F. CONCLUSION AND SCREENING OUTCOME

22. As a result of the above assessments it is considered that the NW Preston Masterplan SPD will not be likely to have any significant environmental, social or economic effects that have not already been covered in the SA of the ‘parent’ APLP and CS. As such the SPD will not trigger the need for an SA.
23. Notwithstanding the above assessment, the SPD has also been screened for significant environmental effects in accordance with the requirements of the SEA Directive and the EAPPR 2004. The required statutory consultation bodies have also been consulted in accordance with the regulations and this screening report has been updated (September 2016) to reflect comments received.
24. The SPD only provides supplementary indicative guidance to assist in the delivery of the principles and the specific criteria that have already been established in the adopted CS and APLP Policy MD2. It is considered that the SPD will not itself have any significant environmental effects and will not trigger the need for an SEA.
25. It is concluded therefore that neither an SA nor an SEA is required for adoption of the North West Preston Masterplan SPD.