

Factsheet 3:

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

What is an SEA and do we have to do one?

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is used to determine whether plans will have significant environmental effects and to help develop ways to deal with those effects.

Not all neighbourhood plans will need to carry out an SEA however, all plans should be assessed to see whether an SEA is needed or not.

Whether you need an SEA for your plan will largely depend on the scale and impact of the proposals in your neighbourhood plan. It is more likely that an SEA will be required if a neighbourhood plan includes proposals relating to the location of new development and the land uses, nature, size etc of development on particular sites. Or if the plan policies extend beyond the Council's current plan requirements, and which therefore would not have been tested in the SA/SEAs of our Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Policies and Site Allocations documents, then the plan will likely require an SEA.

What the Council will do

The Council will need to be sent an early draft version of your neighbourhood plan so that we can assess whether the plan will need an SEA (this is known as 'screening').

Following this, the Council then have to consult with the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage (called the 'consultation bodies') who will consider whether they agree with our view about whether an SEA is needed.

If the Council and the consultation bodies consider that one is required you must prepare an SEA of your neighbourhood plan, alongside the development of your plan, to ensure it meets the basic conditions at examination.

What do we have to do if an SEA is required?

If the Council determines that an SEA is needed and this view is supported by the consultation bodies, you will need to start thinking about how best to co-ordinate this part

of the work to ensure that it becomes part of the development of your neighbourhood plan.

We have produced template reports with an accompanying guidance note that you can use as a starting point for this part of the work. Once you have a positive SEA determination we will send you these documents and if you have any questions we would be happy to go through these with you.

Contact us

If you have any questions on the above or would like to submit an early draft to be screened by the council please contact the Strategic Planning and Implementation Team on Tel: 020 7974 2527 or email: planningpolicy@camden.gov.uk