Introduction

1.1 This screening assessment considers the need for a Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be carried out in respect of the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

1.2 Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, Councils must carry out a strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of land-use and spatial plans. Where the Council can demonstrate that any land use of a spatial plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects an SEA will not be required. In principle, SPDs should not be subject to SA/SEA because they usually supplement new policies or proposals, which have been already been subject to sustainability appraisal through statutory development plan documents.

1.3 This screening assessment sets out Dartford Borough Council’s consideration of whether the proposals put forward in the Parking Standards SPD are likely to have a significant effect on the environment over and above the effects already identified through the SA/SEA undertaken to support the development of the Dartford Core Strategy.

1.4 Dartford’s Core Strategy Document was adopted by the Council in September 2011. The plan commits the Council to developing a car parking SPD with standards that take into account the availability of alternative means of transport, and the need to support the requirements of family life through the provision of visitor parking, and that garages, where provided, are of a fit for purpose size.

Sustainability Appraisal and SEA of the Core Strategy

1.5 Each stage of the Core Strategy’s process – vision and strategic objectives, issues and alternative options, preferred approaches and submission policies (where they differ significantly from the preferred approaches) - were subjected to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). Each of the stages were assessed against 19 SA Framework Objectives to determine the predicted economic, environmental and social effects of the Core Strategy on the Borough. At each stage, the findings of the SA were used to inform the formulation of policies, thereby improving the sustainability of the Core Strategy in the process. These are considered below in so far as they relate to car parking / parking standards.

1.6 The Core Strategy, Preferred Options Document\(^3\) contained 28 preferred approaches. There are six preferred approaches that are of relevance to the parking standards SPD:
- PA3: Network of Key Centres
- PA5: Sustainable Transport and Land-Use.
- PA6: Employment Land.
- PA8: Employment.
- PA9: Ensuring the Success of Ebbsfleet.
- PA 17: Design of Homes.

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\(^1\) Dartford Core Strategy Policy CS15: Managing Transport Demand  
\(^2\) Dartford Core Strategy: Policy CS17: Design of Homes  
\(^3\) Dartford’s Core Strategy: Preferred Options, Dartford Borough Council, January 2008
1.7 The SA Report\(^4\) of the Core Strategy Preferred Options Document appraised PA3, PA5, PA6, PA8, PA14 and PA17 together with other preferred policy approaches. The SA set out a few mitigation and enhancement measures that are relevant to parking standards and these along with a summary of the preferred approach are set out in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA Objective</th>
<th>Suggested mitigation and enhancement measures that are relevant to parking standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PA3: Network of Key Centres</strong></td>
<td>The approach is to encourage the success of Dartford town centre, Bluewater and Ebbsfleet.&lt;br&gt;Accessibility</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PA5: Sustainable Transport and Land-Use</strong></td>
<td>The approach provides for a pattern of development which results in a close interrelationship between complementary land-uses; promotion of Fastrack as an integrated public transport network; and enhancements to the strategic and rail network to maintain the Borough’s competitive advantage.&lt;br&gt;Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PA6: Employment Land</strong></td>
<td>The approach uses the Draft SE Plan figure as a guide in allocating land for business uses and sets out the major sites for employment or mixed development. The major sites are located north of A2.&lt;br&gt;Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PA8: Employment Growth</strong></td>
<td>The approach seeks to provide sufficient jobs to match the number of new economically active residents, allow for some reduce in out-commuting. It considered it critical that the phasing of jobs and homes is aligned.&lt;br&gt;Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PA9: Ensuring the Success of Ebbsfleet</strong></td>
<td>The approach encourages the development of Ebbsfleet as a top class business district.&lt;br&gt;Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PA17: Design of Homes</strong></td>
<td>The approach included the provision of “Useable parking space provided in a way that does not dominate the street scene.”&lt;br&gt;Accessibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How the SA has influenced the Core Strategy**

1.8 The Dartford Local Development Framework Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment at Appendix X ‘Progression: How the Sustainability Appraisal has influenced Dartford’s Core Strategy’ sets out how the recommendations from the SA have been taken forward into the Core Strategy. Car parking is referred to in the section on the 2008 Preferred Options Document Appraisal under Mitigation and Enhancement Measures.

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\(^4\) SA/SEA: Dartford Core Strategy Preferred Options Document, Enfusion, January 2008
The SA recommendation was for “parking controls, green travel plans, car clubs, public transport” which the SA comments “The Core Strategy already covers these mitigation measures adequately within the existing Preferred Approaches.”

1.9 Appendix X also refers to ‘Recommendations from the Dartford Town Centre Area Action Plan Preferred Options Document Appraisal’. Issue 6: Transportation recommended that “The Core Strategy should consider maximum car parking standards”. The SA sets out that “Minimising car use … is now covered in Preferred Approach 14 Integrated Transport and Land-Use. Useable parking spaces that do not dominate the street scene and priority for those on for and bicycle in internal estate roads are now covered in Preferred Approach 17 Design of Homes.”

Potential changes to SA/SEA findings relating to parking standards.

1.10 The Parking Standards SPD has been informed by the Dartford Core Strategy and provides further guidance with regard to polices contained within the development plan document. The SPD sets out:
- Key parking issues and design requirements that developments should take into consideration.
- Parking standards for vehicles, motorcycles/scooters/mopeds and cycles, and for people with impaired mobility. It also sets out vehicle parking bay sizes and garage/car port/barn minimum size requirements.

1.11 The SPD has also drawn upon the Parking Standards Background Paper which forms the evidence base for the SPD. The SPD, once adopted, will not provide additional or changed statutory policy to that set out in the Core Strategy and the application of the guidance will not change the sustainability and environmental effects already identified through the Core Strategy SA/SEA.

Appropriate Assessment

1.12 The Appropriate Assessment has been prepared for the Core Strategy, and therefore an AA focussing specifically on the SPD is not warranted.

Conclusion

1.13 The policy approach to the provision of parking standards has been sufficiently appraised at the higher Core Strategy level. The SPD does not introduce new policy approaches – it simply expands upon the policies contained in the Core Strategy. The Council considers that the Parking Standards SPD will not result in any additional significant effects to those already identified through the higher level sustainability appraisal and SEA. It will provide more detailed guidance to ensure that the potential effects indentified in the Core Strategy SA/SEA are effected.

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