

# Birmingham City Council

**Birmingham Unitary Development Plan -  
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)  
Telecommunications Development:  
Mobile Phone Infrastructure**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)  
Screening Statement**

## **Strategic Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004: SEA Screening Statement**

**Title of Plan:** Telecommunications Development: Mobile Phone Infrastructure

**Type of Plan:** Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

### **Subject and Area Covered by the Plan:**

The SPD covers the whole of Birmingham and relates to the following policies in The Birmingham Plan 2005(UDP):

Para 3.8	Environment strategy principles
Para 3.10	Quality of the built environment
Para 3.14D	Urban design principles
Para 3.25	Listed buildings
Para 3.27	Conservation areas
Para 3.41	Green belt
Para 3.52	Open space
Para 8.55	Telecommunications

### **Introduction**

This statement sets out the City Council's determination under Regulation 9 (1) of the Strategic Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 on whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required for the above plan.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

Many plans and programmes relating to planning and land use will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The purpose of a SEA is to identify the main environmental issues that are relevant to the plan, the likely significant effects of the plan on a range of environmental issues, and where there are likely to be adverse effects, how they might be mitigated. Authorities carrying out a SEA are required to prepare an Environmental Report summarising the key issues and effects, and explaining how they propose to mitigate the adverse impacts of the plan or programme.

Before the authority begins to prepare the plan, it must first of all determine whether or not a SEA is required. This depends upon the nature of the plan, and whether or not it is likely to have significant environmental effects. It is anticipated that nearly all Development Plan Documents (DPD) will require a SEA, since they contain statutory planning policies that are likely to have such effects.

However, the position on Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) is much less clear-cut. The purpose of an SPD is to support the policies in an existing development plan or an adopted DPD. As they are intended to clarify or supplement policies that have already been adopted, many of them will not have significant environmental effects over and above the policy that they support. Where this is the case, a SEA is unlikely to be required.

## **Sustainability Appraisal**

Under separate legislation (the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004), the City Council is required to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal for all Local Development Documents (LDD), including this one. This considers the impact of the plan upon important environmental interests as well as social and economic interests.

In accordance with current Government advice, the Sustainability Appraisal Report that has been prepared for this plan includes all of the information that an environmental report for a SEA should include. In other words, the Sustainability Appraisal Report addresses the essential requirements for a SEA environmental report, whether or not a SEA is required.

## **The SEA Screening Process**

The process for determining whether or not a SEA is required is called screening. The screening process involves consulting the following statutory bodies on whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects:

- Natural England
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency

As well as consulting the above bodies, authorities are required to take into account the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations when determining whether or not the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. For details of the criteria, please refer to the Appendix.7

Within 28 days of making its determination, the authority must publish a statement such as this one, setting out its decision. If it determines that a SEA is not required, the statement must include the reasons for this.

In the case of this plan, the City Council wrote to the statutory bodies on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Their responses were as follows:

<b>Natural England</b>	Received on 02/05/2007 confirms a SEA is not required
<b>English Heritage</b>	Received on 20/04/2007 have not stated a SEA is required

**Environment Agency**

Received on 18/04/2007 confirms a SEA is not required

The City Council has also considered the plan against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations, and a summary of this analysis is attached to this document (see Appendix).

### **Reasons for Determination**

Having consulted the statutory bodies, and having considered the criteria set out in the Regulations, the City Council considers that the guidance is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects. It builds on existing policies and includes the information and requirements that need to be taken into account when the local planning authority is considering proposals for telecommunications infrastructure within Birmingham.

The City Council has therefore determined that no SEA is required for this plan.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA):**

#### **The City Council's Determination - Telecommunications Development: Mobile Phone Infrastructure**

The City Council has determined that for the reasons set out in this SEA Screening Statement, the above SPD DOES not require a SEA.

**PREPARED BY: G MITCHELL**

**SIGNED BY CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION:**

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Councillor Neville Summerfield  
Cabinet Member for Regeneration

**DATE OF DETERMINATION: (INSERT DATE)**

## Appendix

### Telecommunications Development: Mobile Phone Infrastructure Consideration of Schedule 1 Criteria

Schedule 1 Criteria	City Council's Response
<b>1. Characteristics of the Plan</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.	Supports policies in the UDP by developing and explaining existing policy, rather than setting a framework for policies.
(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	It is influenced by existing plans and policies.
(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	Has some relevance (see Sustainability Assessment)
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	None
(e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community (EU) legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection.	N/A
<b>2. Characteristics of the Effects and the Area Likely to be Affected</b>	
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	If planning permission is granted for telecommunications development then it will have some effects but the SPD seeks to mitigate such effects. The effects may not be permanent, as infrastructure should be removed when it becomes technologically obsolete.
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects.	The cumulative impact of such developments is a matter taken into account when planning applications are determined.
(c) The trans-boundary nature of the	None

effects.	
(d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).	Applications must be accompanied by a written statement that emissions from mobile phone base stations meet the ICNIRP guidelines for public exposure to electromagnetic fields.
(e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	Dependent on the size and location of the proposal but effects likely to be localised.
(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</li> <li>(ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</li> <li>(iii) Intensive land-use.</li> </ul>	The guidance develops UDP policy by identifying sensitive areas and discouraging telecommunications development in those areas and also in residential areas and areas of high quality open space except in circumstances where there are no other appropriate locations.
(g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or International protection status.	As above