Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Determination Statement for the Spelthorne Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Executive Summary

This Screening Statement determines whether the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ("SEA Regulations"), and whether a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is required.

The Climate Change SPD provides guidance to support the implementation of adopted Local Plan policies relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation. It does not allocate land, does not introduce new policy, does not amend the quantum or distribution of development, and does not alter the policy framework established through the adopted Local Plan.

The adopted Local Plan has already been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Climate Change SPD provides additional guidance only to support the implementation of those policies and does not give rise to likely significant environmental effects in its own right.

Conclusion:

Having assessed the SPD against the Schedule 1 criteria of the SEA Regulations and having regard to the scope and characteristics of the document, the Council has determined that the Climate Change SPD is unlikely to have significant environmental effects. A Strategic Environmental Assessment is therefore not required. A Sustainability Appraisal is also not required, consistent with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

Consultation:

In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations, the Screening Statement was consulted upon with Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency. All three statutory consultees confirmed that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required. Next steps:

- Publish the SEA Screening Determination alongside the draft Climate Change SPD at Regulation 12 public consultation.
- Proceed to adoption of the Climate Change SPD, with the Determination remaining publicly available in accordance with the SEA Regulations.

Introduction

Spelthorne Borough Council has prepared a Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support the implementation of adopted Local Plan policies relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation. In accordance with Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ("the SEA Regulations"), the Council has screened the SPD to determine whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

This Screening Determination has been informed by the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Statement for the Climate Change SPD (March 2026) and the responses received from the statutory environmental bodies.

Legislative and Policy Background

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and SPDs

Section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Planning Act 2008, removed the requirement for Local Planning Authorities to prepare a Sustainability Appraisal for Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Subsequent regulations confirm that SPDs do not require SA unless there are effects not covered by the SA/SEA of the parent development plan, or where an assessment is otherwise required under the SEA Directive.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The SEA Directive (2001/42/EC), transposed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, requires an assessment where a plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects. SPDs may, in exceptional circumstances, require SEA; the determining factor is whether significant environmental effects are likely in practice.

Screening Requirement and Consultation

Under Regulation 9, before determining whether SEA is required, the Council must consider the criteria in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations and consult the three statutory environmental bodies (Natural England, Historic England, Environment Agency). If the Council determines that significant environmental effects are unlikely, SEA is not required; the Council must provide a Statement of Reasons (Regulation 9(3)).

Local Plan

The Spelthorne Local Plan 2024–2039/40 has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal incorporating SEA at all relevant stages. Policies relating to climate change have therefore already been assessed for likely significant effects. The Climate Change SPD will sit alongside the Local Plan once adopted and will be a material consideration in decision-making. The Local Plan was adopted in March 2026.

Purpose and Scope of the Spelthorne Climate Change SPD

The Climate Change SPD provides detailed guidance to support the implementation of Local Plan policies, including:

- Supports the effective implementation of existing climate-related policies
- Provides additional guidance for applicants, including checklists and illustrative examples
- Consolidates principles around energy use, renewable energy, water management, green infrastructure, sustainable transport, material selection, and climate-resilient design
- Will be updated post-adoption of the new Local Plan but does not alter policy wording or function

The SPD does not:

- Allocate land
- Change the quantum or spatial distribution of development
- Create new policy or new development requirements
- Override Local Plan policies
- Introduce new environmental constraints
- Require any development beyond what the Local Plan already allows

The SPD does:

- Assist applicants in understanding existing policy expectations
- Improve clarity and consistency in decision-making
- Encourage best practice in climate mitigation and adaptation

Screening Methodology

The Council has applied the Schedule 1 criteria of the SEA Regulations to determine whether the SPD is likely to have significant environmental effects. The screening draws on:

- The Local Plan SA/SEA and relevant topic evidence (including biodiversity, heritage, flood risk, landscape and air quality);

- Professional planning judgement on whether the SPD would alter the quantum, location or nature of development;
- Development management processes and statutory environmental controls that will continue to apply at the application stage; and
- Regulation 9 consultation responses received from the statutory environmental bodies.

The detailed assessment is set out in Table 1. A concise outcome summary is provided in Table 2.

Table 1 Screening Assessment (Schedule 1 Criteria)

Criteria for determining likely significance of effects on the environment	Significant environmental effect?	Justification
Characteristics of the Climate Change SPD		
(a) Degree to which the SPD sets a framework for projects/activities (location, nature, size, operating conditions or allocating resources)	**No**	The SPD provides guidance to implement Local Plan policies. It does not set a development framework, allocate land, or influence the scale or location of development. The Local Plan (subject to SA/SEA) sets the framework.
(b) Influence on other plans and programmes, including those in a hierarchy	**No**	The SPD is subordinate to the Local Plan. It assists implementation and does not influence higher-order plans or introduce new strategic directions.
(c) Relevance for integrating environmental considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development	**No**	The SPD reinforces environmental considerations already embedded in the Local Plan SA/SEA.
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the SPD	**No**	The SPD does not generate new development

		or alter development patterns. Environmental issues (flood risk, biodiversity, air quality, heritage) are addressed through Local Plan policy and development management.
(e) Relevance for implementing environmental legislation (e.g., waste, water)	**No**	The SPD does not establish environmental programmes. It supports Local Plan policies that already reflect statutory requirements. It only explains existing policy expectations.
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected		
(a) Probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects	**No**	The SPD provides clarification on existing policies; it does not introduce development or alter effects associated with climate change already assessed in the SA/SEA.
(b) Cumulative nature of effects	**No**	SPD does not generate cumulative environmental change.
(c) Transboundary nature of effects	**No**	The SPD applies within Spelthorne and contains no proposals likely to give rise to cross-boundary environmental effects.
(d) Risks to human health or the environment (e.g., due to accidents)	**No**	The SPD does not enable development that would introduce new risks. Risks are managed through

		Local Plan policy, building regulations, and environmental legislation.
(e) Magnitude and spatial extent of effects (area and population affected)	**No**	The SPD is borough-wide guidance on climate change. No direct environmental effects arise beyond those already assessed for the Local Plan.
(f) Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected: (i) special natural characteristics/cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental standards/limit values; (iii) intensive land-use	**No**	The SPD does not introduce development that could adversely affect designated or sensitive areas. Development remains subject to Local Plan safeguards and statutory protections.
(g) Effects on areas/landscapes with recognised national, Community or international protection status	**No**	Protected sites and landscapes are safeguarded through Local Plan policy and separate legal regimes. The SPD does not alter these protections or introduce development with potential effects on such areas.

Screening Determination (Regulation 9(3)) — Final

Having regard to the Schedule 1 criteria and the scope and purpose of the Climate Change SPD, the Council's determination is that the SPD is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and therefore does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

This determination is based on the following reasons:

1. The SPD does not allocate land, change the spatial strategy, or increase the quantum of development established by the Local Plan.

2. The SPD does not introduce new policy; it provides guidance to support implementation of existing Local Plan policies that have already been subject to SA/SEA; and
3. Potential environmental effects arising from development proposals will continue to be addressed through Local Plan policies, statutory environmental controls, and project-level assessments where required.

Consultation with Statutory Bodies

In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations, the Council consulted the statutory environmental bodies on the Screening Statement prior to publication of the draft Climate Change SPD:

- Natural England
- Historic England
- Environment Agency

Consultation period: 11 March 2026 to 08 April 2026 (28 days).

All three statutory environmental bodies confirmed that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required for the Climate Change SPD. No objections were received.

Next Steps

1. Publish the SEA Screening Determination alongside the draft Climate Change SPD at Regulation 12 public consultation.
2. Proceed to adoption of the Climate Change SPD.
3. Ensure the Screening Determination remains publicly available in accordance with the SEA Regulations.

References and Information Sources

- Spelthorne Local Plan 2024–2039/40 — Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) and evidence base
- Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended)
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Planning Act 2008)
- National Planning Policy and Planning Practice Guidance on SEA/SA
- Local evidence base relevant to environmental topics (biodiversity, heritage, flood risk, landscape, air quality)

Table 2 — Screening Outcome and Reasons (Summary)

Trigger / Consideration	Outcome	Reason(s)
New land allocations or change to development quantum/location	**No**	SPD does not allocate land or alter the spatial strategy/quantum set in the Local Plan.
Introduction of new policy (beyond Local Plan)	**No**	SPD provides guidance to implement existing policies only.
Potential for significant effects on protected sites/landscapes	**No**	Protections remain via Local Plan policy and statutory regimes; SPD does not change these.
Potential for cumulative or cross boundary effects	**No**	SPD guidance is borough-wide and administrative; no cross-boundary or cumulative environmental effects are anticipated.
SEA required?	**Not required**	Schedule 1 assessment (Table 1) indicates no likely significant environmental effects. Determination to be finalised post-Regulation 9 consultation.