

Stratford-Upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan Framework SPD

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

September 2023

STEP 1 – DETAILS OF THE PLAN

Responsible Authority:

Stratford-upon-Avon District Council

Title of the plan:

Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): The Masterplan Framework (June 2023)

What prompted the plan:

(e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)

To provide a Masterplan SPD for a new mixed-use destination, including the World Shakespeare Centre, and public realm, to both improve the northern access and orientation to Stratford-upon-Avon. The aim for the Plan is to guide regeneration of the Gateway site in a way that benefits the wider district and region, as well as Stratford-upon-Avon's standing as a town of international importance while also achieving the relevant principles of the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy Policy AS.1, the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and Proposal SUA.6 in the emerging Site Allocations Plan (SAP).

Plan subject:

(e.g. transport)

Redevelopment of brownfield land with a mix of uses including World Shakespeare Centre

Screening is required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Based on Boxes 3 and 4, our view is that:

An SEA is required, as the environmental effects are likely to be significant.

An SEA is not required, as the environmental effects are unlikely to be significant:

Please indicate below what Section of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 this plan falls within:

- Section 5(2)

Contact details:

Louisa Slator louisa.slator@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Date:

06 September 2023

STEP 2 – CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN

Context of the Plan:

Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) seeks to encourage the regeneration of land to the northwest of the town centre to form a new 'Gateway' into the town, while extending the town centre offer into and through the site towards the emerging Canal Quarter, for which a separate masterplan has already been prepared. The Gateway site has been identified by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust as a suitable location for a new visitor attraction celebrating the life and work of William Shakespeare. The proposed World Shakespeare Centre (WSC) will anchor a broader mix of town centre uses and provide a complementary addition to Shakespeare's birthplace the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), and other existing cultural attractions around the town.

Description of the Plan:

The Gateway site is located to the northwest of the existing town centre of Stratford-upon-Avon. It is bounded by Birmingham Road to the northeast, Arden Street to the northwest, and Windsor Street to the southeast. It occupies a transitional zone between the historic core of the town, and more recent peripheral expansion characterised by mixed commercial and employment uses. The Gateway site is currently underutilised brownfield land in different ownerships with the Council being the largest landowner. The site has a number of existing buildings and uses (ranging between 2 and 5 storeys). Much of the site is used for vehicle parking including surface parking, a multi-storey car park (MSCP) and a surface coach park.

The masterplan framework envisions a new gateway to the historic town centre replacing the multi-storey car park and coach park with high-quality public realm and inclusive new spaces, places, and facilities, anchored by a world-class celebration of the world's greatest playwright: William Shakespeare.

The SPD is structured as follows:

- Section 1 introduces the purpose the Masterplan Framework and its status as a material planning consideration.
- Section 2 - Vision - sets out the vision and ambition for the scheme including the benefits it will bring to the town.
- Section 3 - Planning policy context - provides an overview of relevant adopted and emerging planning policy that has informed the SPD.
- Section 4 - Understanding context - provides an overview of the Gateway site's local and wider urban context, its history and key issues and opportunities.
- Section 5 - Masterplan Framework - articulates the vision for the Gateway site, key principles guiding its future development and a Masterplan Framework consisting of a suite of parameter plans within which the vision can be achieved through high quality architectural proposals.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 6 - Delivery - explains how the vision could be delivered, identifies key components, and sets priorities through an indicative phasing plan
<p>What are the key components of the plan?</p>	<p>Mixed uses (including Use class E, C1, C3), Cultural uses (Class F1), ancillary uses including re-provision of public car parking, public realm improvements and green and blue infrastructure.</p>
<p>Have any of the components of the plan been considered in previous SEA work?</p>	<p>The Gateway Site was assessed as part of the Stratford-On-Avon Site Allocations Plan (SAP): Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (August 2020) and Addendum (May 2022).</p> <p>Since this appraisal, the proposals have evolved and following consultation with Historic England, it was requested that the Masterplan SPD be assessed again for the SEA screening.</p>
<p>In terms of your response to Boxes 7 and 8 above, set out those components of the plan that are likely to require screening:</p>	<p>The Masterplan Framework SPD has been assessed as part of the SEA screening.</p>

**STEP 3 – IDENTIFYING INTERACTIONS OF THE PLAN WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AND
CONSIDERING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF ANY INTERACTIONS (Error! Reference source not found.)**

Plan Components	Environmental Topic Areas											Explanation of Potential Environmental Effects	Explanation of Significance
	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Population and human health	Soil	Water	Air	Climatic factors	Material assets	Cultural heritage	Townscape	Noise	Cumulative		
Masterplan SPD	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	Detail on impacts on receptors and potential environmental effects are provided in Step 4.	No likely significant effects identified.

STEP 4 – STATEMENT OF THE FINDINGS OF THE SCREENING

Summary of interactions with the environment and statement of the findings of the Screening:

(Including an outline of the likely significance of any interactions, positive or negative, and explanation of conclusion of the screening exercise.)

In August 2023, Montagu Evans LLP prepared the (Built) Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA) on behalf of SDC, to appraise the potential heritage, townscape and visual considerations concerning the future regenerative development of a new 'Gateway' into Stratford-upon-Avon.

This assessment informed the SEA screening and conclusions on significant effects.

The HTVIA concluded that:

“the development parameters set out within the Masterplan Framework SPD stand to introduce transformative change to the north-western gateway into the town centre. It has been demonstrated within this report that potential effects arising from the redevelopment of the Site, both in relation to impacts on the significance of designated and non-

designated heritage assets and impacts on townscape character can be appropriately mitigated and enhanced through embedded design mitigation, underpinned by the principles set out in the SPD. The presence of designated and non-designated heritage assets within and surrounding the SPD Site's boundary does not preclude development.

Where is considered that the future redevelopment of the Site has the potential to cause residual harm (after proposed mitigation measures – as noted within this report), this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, including the potential to contribute to housing delivery, possibilities of enhanced public realm, the provision of new cultural destinations, improved connections and permeability through the town centre and enhanced biodiversity.”

The SEA screening has concluded no significant adverse effects on heritage and townscape. No significant beneficial effects are concluded at this early stage as this will be dependent on the design and execution of the Masterplan SPD.

The SEA screening supports the mitigation and enhancement measures proposed in the HTVIA, which are recommended to be carried forward as part of the Masterplan SPD. The HTVIA integrates cumulative environmental benefits of increased biodiversity, pedestrian access and improved public realm and heritage experience to maximise positive outcomes.

Adverse Impacts

Based on discussions with SDC, the following relevant assumptions have been made for the screening:

- Existing trees of category B (moderate) or above (BS 5837:2012) will be retained.
- No culverts within the site extents.
- No loss of businesses beyond the multi-storey car park.

The following minor adverse impacts were identified:

Population and human health

- Likely temporary construction impacts on air quality, noise, and access in proximity to the hospital.
- A temporary change in attributes of land use, including residential properties.

Air Quality

- Additional deck to car park on Arden Road would likely impact operational traffic movements within the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) over Stratford-upon-Avon. It is assumed no net increase in parking capacity

across the SPD and therefore a minor impact from a change to traffic movements / concentration is likely a reasonable worst case.

Cultural Heritage

- Temporary construction activities within the setting of listed buildings.

Townscape

- Temporary construction activities within the town centre.

Noise

- Additional deck to car park on Arden Road would likely impact operational traffic movements within the town centre. It is assumed no net increase in parking capacity across the SPD and therefore a minor impact from a change to traffic movements / concentration is likely a reasonable worst case.

Beneficial Impacts

Based on discussions with SDC, the following relevant assumptions have been made for the screening:

- SPD will improve biodiversity net gain by a minimum of 10%.
- Some of the likely impacts identified have the potential magnitude of moderate or above. Where this impacts on a highly sensitive receptor, this has the potentially significant beneficial effect. The extent of the benefits will be dependent on the final design and execution of the proposals. At this early design stage, there is an inherent uncertainty, and the benefits are assumed to be minor as a reasonable worst case. This is considered a robust and proportionate assessment approach.
- A net increase in commercial uses (Class E), residential uses (Class C3) as well as potential for hotel uses (Class C1) as a result of the proposals.

The following minor beneficial impacts were identified:

Biodiversity, flora, and fauna

- Introduction of green space and green corridors would improve biodiversity connectivity and resilience.

Population and human health

- Introduction of new pedestrian access through the site
- Increased capacity of housing.

- Potential to foster a vibrant mix of complementary uses that will extend the town centre offer, extend dwell time, and tourism spend in the town centre.

Water

- Introduction of green/ blue infrastructure would reduce impermeable surfaces and increased stormwater retention.

Air Quality

- Reduction of traffic within the Stratford AQMA if parking spaces from the multi-storey car park are not re-provided at Arden Street car park. Removal of coach parking within the AQMA.

Climatic Factors

- Introduction of green space, shading opportunities, and improved urban climate resilience.

Cultural Heritage

- Removal of multi-storey car park and associated traffic from the setting of listed buildings.

Townscape

- Removal of multi-storey car park and associated traffic from town centre. Introduction of pedestrian access and placemaking improvements.

Noise

- Reduction of traffic within the town centre if parking spaces from the multi-storey car park are not re-provided at Arden Street car park. Removal of coach parking.

Cumulative

- Creating new green corridors and active travel routes across the site and connects with other developments, including Canal Quarter Regeneration Zone SPD development to the northeast.
- New green space and active travel routes are likely to result in intra-cumulative impacts; enhancing biodiversity, public realm and reduce reliance on private vehicles.
- New tourist infrastructure focused on local heritage is likely to have beneficial impacts on heritage attractions in and around Stratford-Upon-Avon, increasing the capacity, information and interconnectivity between heritage assets as well as improving the economic potential.

Negligible Impacts

Remainder of impacts on topic areas considered negligible / uncertain:

- Biodiversity, flora, and fauna – construction impacts considered negligible.
- Soil – construction / operational impacts considered negligible.
- Water – construction impacts considered negligible.
- Air – construction impacts uncertain at this stage.
- Climatic factors – construction impacts considered negligible.
- Material assets – construction / operational impacts considered negligible.
- Noise – construction impacts uncertain at this stage.
- Cumulative – construction impacts considered negligible.

Summary of Identified Significant Effects

No direct impacts on receptors identified as high or very high sensitivity for the environmental topics.

No identified impacts of magnitude moderate or above.

Table: Significant Effects

Receptor Sensitivity/ Value	Impact Magnitude			
	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Slight
Medium	Negligible	Negligible	Slight	Moderate
High	Negligible	Slight	Moderate	Substantial
Very High	Slight	Moderate	Substantial	Substantial

Significant effects are defined as moderate and above (as per the significant effects table). No likely significant effects identified as a result of the proposed Masterplan SPD.

Recommendations

These recommendations are intended for SDC to consider following the SEA screening for the Masterplan SPD. This list is not exhaustive but focused on key target areas based on professional experience and relevant to the likely impacts identified as part of the screening.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a strategy to develop land and contribute to the recovery of nature. It is a way of making sure the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development¹. The requirement is enforced by the 2021 Environment Act, which introduced an automatic new condition to every planning permission granted: a BNG of 10%.

The baseline conditions of the Masterplan SPD appear to be very low biodiversity as there is limited green space. It is likely that a 10% improvement on such a low baseline will not be sufficient to match the ambitions of a world-class celebration of the world's greatest playwright that increases access to green space, promote natural cooling and increases resilience to heritage assets. Neither will it likely reflect the action needed to tackle the climate emergency declaration by SDC.

The Masterplan would benefit from following the principles of the Lawton Review² - bigger, better, more joined up habitat, and promote native species that connect with the works of Shakespeare (and associated attractions) and the Part N: Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure of the SDC Development Requirements SPD.

Measures should include:

- Green infrastructure for shade—this is anticipated to be a potentially significant future issue and an important part of building as our climate changes.
- Include green areas and tree pits to provide sustainable and effective urban drainage systems to increase resilience by attenuating and treating increases in surface water runoff from additional areas of hardstanding.
- Avoid removing trees where possible. An arboricultural survey is recommended for the potentially impacted trees to assess their value and health. Arboricultural recommendations should inform the design of the Masterplan SPD.

¹ [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain#:~:text=Biodiversity%20net%20gain%20\(%20BNG%20\)%20is,than%20it%20was%20before%20development.](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain#:~:text=Biodiversity%20net%20gain%20(%20BNG%20)%20is,than%20it%20was%20before%20development.)

² <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/43641/the-lawton-review-factsheet.pdf>

- Explore the incorporation of blue infrastructure, such as rainwater gardens, to enhance the site's environmental sustainability.

Access and Connectivity

The Masterplan proposals adds new pedestrian infrastructure and accessibility into and across the site. The Masterplan identifies the opportunity to *“prioritise pedestrian movement into and through the site while providing for coach drop-offs in a more environmentally friendly way, and making more efficient use of existing car parks adjacent to the site to reprovide public car parking which would otherwise be lost to redevelopment.”*

Measures should include:

- New routes in combination with supporting infrastructure such as rest areas, green space and water fountains have the potential to create synergies and improve the public realm.
- A bike share scheme or similar that connects the wider heritage attractions. SDC should plan strategically to connect these attractions with safe pedestrian and cycle routes.

Sustainability

The Masterplan Framework follows the placemaking principles set out in the National Design Guide and sets out ten characteristics for well-designed places.

Measures should include:

- Integrate the design into context as per the HTVIA mitigation and enhancement measures
- In line with NPPF (2021)³, set measurable objectives on biodiversity, carbon and air quality to:
 - protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment
 - support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate
 - take into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones
- new use of brownfield land that is compatible with the surrounding uses

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

Stratford On Avon District Council
Planning Policy
Elizabeth House Church Street
Stratford-upon-Avon
Warwickshire
CV37 6HX

Our ref: SV/2023/111849/OT-
01/IS1-L01
Your ref:
Date: 05 October 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening for Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Thank you for seeking the Environment Agency's formal comments on the SEA Screening Report prepared in respect of the Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan Framework SPD.

For completeness, we are in receipt of the SEA Screening Report (dated September 2023), including Appendices 1 and 2.

Screening is required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The report includes several environmental topic areas as set out in Annex I(f) of the SEA Directive, which appear reasonable to reflect the purpose of this report and consider its environmental affects.

Considering the environmental matters within our statutory remit, we note the area covered by the SPD does not include any watercourses or areas of fluvial floodplain. As such, we confirm agreement with the Report conclusion that an SEA is not required, as the environmental effects are unlikely to be significant.

I trust that the above is of assistance at this time.

Yours faithfully

Mrs. Tessa Jones
Planning Specialist

Environment Agency
Mance House Worcester Road, Kidderminster, DY11 7RA.
Customer services line: 03708 506 506
www.gov.uk/environment-agency
End

Louisa Slator

From: SM-NE-Plan Cons Area Team (West Midlands) (NE)
Sent: 19 September 2023 09:11
To: Louisa Slator
Subject: Consultation: SEA Screening for Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan Framework SPD
Attachments: SEA Screening Report WSC Sept 2023.pdf; Appendix 1 - Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway SPD.pdf; Appendix 2 - HTVIA.pdf

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Dear Louisa

Thank you for the consultation. I can confirm that Natural England supports your conclusion that the SPD can be screened out.


Kind regards

Rob Sargent

Team Leader – West Mids
Natural England



From: Louisa Slator <Louisa.Slator@stratford-dc.gov.uk>
Sent: 15 September 2023 10:15



Subject: Consultation: SEA Screening for Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan Framework SPD

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Dear statutory consultees,

SWECO has prepared the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening of the Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan Framework SPD.

Please find attached the Screening Report, and the corresponding Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan Framework SPD as well as the HTVIA for the SPD.

We would welcome any comments from the statutory consultees regarding this Screening Report.

It has been advised for the SPD to be screened out for SEA.

We propose to run the consultation window for the SEA Screening for three weeks, in which case we will look forward to your responses by the 6th October 2023. Please let me know at your earliest convenience if there are any issues with this.

Kind regards,
Louisa

Louisa Slator
Policy Planner



Stratford-on-Avon District Council
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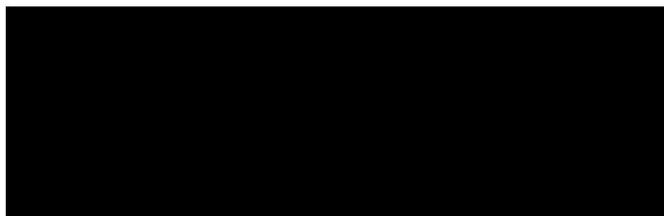
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Historic England

Our ref: PL-00794016

Your ref:



FAO:

Louisa.Slator@stratford-dc.gov.uk

04 October 2023

Dear Madam,

Stratford-on-Avon District Council Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report for consultation (September 2023)

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report for the Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process.

With regard to the Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan SPD Screening Report Historic England notes that the SEA Screening has been informed by the recent (Built) Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA). Whilst we agree with the conclusions of the HTVIA that *"potential effects arising from the redevelopment of the Site, both in relation to impacts on the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets and impacts on townscape character can be appropriately mitigated and enhanced through embedded design mitigation"*, we do have concerns that the scheme could be harmful to the historic environment in NPPF terms and consider that any redevelopment scheme for the Gateway site should be heritage-led.

Therefore, in relation to the SPD Screening Report we would concur with your assessment that the document is unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects. As a result, we would endorse the Authority's conclusions that it is not necessary to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment of this particular SPD.



Historic England, Midlands Regions Group, The Foundry, 82 Granville Street, Birmingham, B1 2LH

 HistoricEngland.org.uk

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.





However, the views of the other two statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for a SEA is made.

We look forward to engaging with you as this SPD is progressed over the coming months and we should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by the Council in its consultation. To avoid any doubt, this does not affect our obligation to provide further advice and, potentially, object to specific proposals, which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the guidance) where we consider that these would have an adverse impact upon the historic environment.

For information and for further consultation please note our consultation email address

[REDACTED]

We hope that the above comments are of assistance. If you would like any clarification or would like to discuss the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

Elizabeth Boden
Historic Environment Planning Adviser

[REDACTED]

