

# **Householder's Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations**

**Supplementary Planning Document  
revision**

**Strategic Environmental Appraisal**

Initial screening statement

October 2023

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City Council

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 explain how Local Planning Authorities should undertake the Strategic Environment Assessment Directive (SEA) in respect of plans and programmes<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2. The SA is a systematic process that is carried out during the preparation of planning policy, primarily local plans, generally through the Sustainability Appraisal process (SA). Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.
- 1.3. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>2</sup> explains the SEA/SA process in relation to Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). It states that 'Supplementary planning documents do not require a sustainability appraisal but may in exceptional circumstances require a strategic environmental assessment if they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already have been assessed during the preparation of the relevant strategic policies'.
- 1.4. In deciding whether an SPD requires SEA a local planning authority will need to take into account the criteria specified in schedule <sup>1</sup> to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and consult the consultation bodies. This is known as the screening process.
- 1.5. This statement provides the initial screening decision of Exeter City Council in relation to the Householder's Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations SPD for consultation with the three statutory bodies:
  - Environment Agency
  - Natural England; and
  - Historic England.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/regulation/11/made>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

## **2.0 The Householder's Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document - Revision**

- 2.1. The Householder's Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations SPD is a material consideration in planning decisions. The SPD supports existing planning policy already set out in the adopted Local Plan First Review; design policies DG1 and DG4.
- 2.2. There is a current version of the Householder's Guide SPD which was adopted in 2008<sup>3</sup>. The SPD has been revised to bring it up to date. Consultation is taking place between October and December 2023.
- 2.3. The revised SPD has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 2.4. Key changes to the Householder's Guide SPD are listed below:
  - Change of SPD title: Householder's Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations SPD.
  - Additional guidance on design details, materials, the relationship of the development to site boundaries, garden size, access, parking and cycle storage.
  - Additional guidance on the design, size and position of side extensions.
  - Additional guidance on corner plot development, particularly the need to retain building lines and openness.
  - Text relating to loft conversions and associated dormer extensions amended to refer to changes to permitted development rights. This includes the need to use materials that match the existing roofing material.
  - Additional design advice on roof lights and solar panels.
  - Additional guidance on altering roof shape and size, and roof terraces.
  - Additional guidance on the difference between outbuildings or annexes that would be considered ancillary to a house, and those that would be considered to form a new dwelling.
  - Additional guidance on boundary treatments i.e. fencing around properties, and the need for boundary treatments to reflect local character and the character of the city.
  - The requirement that rear extensions should not normally exceed two thirds of the width of the original house has been removed.
- 2.5. This concise set of minor revisions are the focus of this screening statement.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://exeter.gov.uk/media/1660/household-guide-to-extensions-spd.pdf>

### 3.0 The SEA screening assessment

- 3.1. The key to the screening decision is the determination of whether the SPD is likely to have significant environmental effects, using the criteria set out in schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 3.2. The initial screening assessment is set out in the matrix included in Tables 1 and 2.
- 3.3. It should be noted that the currently adopted SPD was subject to previous SA<sup>4</sup> which concluded that the introduction of the document had the potential to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Furthermore, the Householder's Guide SPD is supplementary guidance to the relevant Local Plan policies which were the subject of Sustainability Appraisal during plan preparation.

<b>Characteristics of the Householder's Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations SPD having regard to the following criteria</b>	<b>Summary of likelihood of potential significant effects (negative and positive)</b>
The degree to which the SPD sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	The Householder's Guide SPD acts as guidance to positively influence the design of specific planning proposals for householder extensions and alterations. These will generally be small in scale but there are multiple proposals each year in Exeter. It does not on its own provide a framework for determining applications but the SPD is likely to have minor positive effects.
The degree to which the SPD influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The SPD will act to guide householder alterations and extensions which are significant in quantity within the city, vary in extent, but can individually and cumulatively have an impact. The SPD is likely to have minor positive effects on planning proposals. These are not, however, considered to be 'plans and programmes' and therefore the impact will be neutral.
The relevance of the SPD for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	The Householder's Guide SPD is planned to have a positive environmental impact at a local level. The SPD will ensure future developments integrate environmental considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development.

<sup>4</sup> [https://exeter.gov.uk/media/1891/residential\\_extensions\\_sa.pdf](https://exeter.gov.uk/media/1891/residential_extensions_sa.pdf)

	<p>It provides guidance to promote the use of cycling (cycle storage options), renewable energy, particularly solar panels and garden retention, as well as opportunities to raise the energy efficiency of homes and contribute to the Council's net zero ambition. These contribute to the promotion of sustainable development in individual homes. However any effect will occur only at local level and will not have significant environmental effects.</p> <p>The SPD is likely to have minor positive effects.</p>
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the SPD</p>	<p>Significant environmental problems will not result from the Householder's Guide SPD but it does aims to address environmental problems such as climate change on a very local level. The SPD applies to relatively small scale development, and seeks to identify opportunities for environmental enhancement.</p> <p>The SPD is likely to have minor positive effects.</p>
<p>The relevance of the SPD for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)</p>	<p>The SPD is not directly relevant to this matter as it applies to small scale, householder applications in Exeter only. The likely impact is considered to be neutral.</p>

**Table 1: Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment: Characteristics of the Householder's Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations SPD, revision**

<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected having regard to the following criteria</b>	<b>Summary of likelihood of potential significant effects (negative and positive)</b>
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	<p>Localised impacts of developments on the townscape and local environment are intended to be beneficial and relatively small scale across Exeter. Details will depend on the specific planning applications in future but impacts will be permanent.</p> <p>The SPD is likely to have minor positive effects.</p>
The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>The SPD guidance intends for the cumulative nature of the effects of developments on the townscape and local environment to be beneficial across the city. The SPD will have an impact on many proposals which will act cumulatively but the impact will be minor.</p> <p>The SPD is likely to have minor positive effects.</p>
The transboundary nature of the effects	<p>This SPD is not considered to have transboundary effects as it will only affect small scale, householder development in Exeter only.</p> <p>The likely impact is considered to be neutral.</p>
The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	<p>There are unlikely to be risks to human health or the environment arising from this SPD – it effects small scale householder proposals in terms of detailed design considerations.</p> <p>The likely impact is considered to be neutral.</p>
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	<p>While there are many householder planning applications each year in Exeter, the spatial extent and size of population likely to be affected is not considered to be significant.</p>

	The likely impact is considered to be neutral.
<p>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</li> <li>- Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</li> <li>- Intensive land-use</li> </ul>	<p>The Householder's SPD contains guidance that will help to ensure householder developments contribute positively to the special natural characteristics and cultural heritage of Exeter, but these will only be in a localised area and will not be significant across the city. The SPD will not significantly affect the intensity of land use.</p> <p>The likely impact is considered to be neutral.</p>
<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status</p>	<p>The SPD has no direct effect on national or internationally protected landscapes as it only applies to small scale developments in Exeter which do not have such designations.</p> <p>The likely impact is considered to be neutral.</p>

**Table 2: Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment: Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected**

#### **4.0 Initial decision: Determination – Statement of reasons**

- 4.1. It is demonstrated in Tables 1 and 2, through the assessment related to the criteria in the SEA Directive Criteria, that Householder's Guide: Design of Extensions and Alterations SPD revision will not have significant environmental effects. The impact of the SPD revisions is likely to be minor positive.
- 4.2. The three statutory consultation bodies of the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England are being consulted on this initial screening statement and determination during October and November 2023.
- 4.3. An updated statement will be produced with reference to responses received.

**Date: 30 October 2023**