

Meeting:	Strategic Planning Advisory Panel
Date:	Wednesday 13 th July 2005
Subject:	Access for All Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Responsible Officer:	Director of Strategy (Urban Living)
Contact Officer:	Ali Kashmiri, Access Officer
Portfolio Holder:	Planning, Development and Housing
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

The Panel is recommended to:-

- (i) note the content of this report;
- (ii) authorise officers to commence the initial work on the engagement with the four statutory consultation authorities with environmental responsibilities in line with the European Directive 2001/42/EC Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (SEA) and the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
- (iii) note that, following (ii), subsequent consultation will also be required to be undertaken with relevant authorities, the public and key stakeholders on the scope of the Access for All SPD and its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal.

Reason for report

The Access for All SPD will ensure that new and existing developments, services and facilities are accessible to everyone and built in accordance with the spirit of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the progress made in respect of this SPD and its accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report.

Benefits

To ensure that access considerations form an integral part of the development process. To ensure local services and facilities are accessible to everyone.

Cost of Proposals

The cost of producing the SPD and associated SA will be met within the approved Departmental budget.

Risks

Failure to carry out the procedures set down in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulations would render the Council open to legal challenge. Delay in meeting the Local Development Scheme (LDS) timetable milestones may also lead to a reduction in the Planning Delivery Grant (PDG).

Implications if recommendations rejected

This will lead to a failure to meet the approved LDS timetable and the need to continue to use outdated Access SPG.

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

Following the introduction of detailed legislative frameworks and access guidance documents, a new and more comprehensive SPD is needed to replace the outdated Supplementary Planning Guidance, which was formally adopted by the Council in 1994. The previous Access Guide was prepared against policies in the 1994 HUDP, and needs comprehensive updating. Because of this, whilst it is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, it does not have the status accorded to other matters in the LDS which are linked to saved policies in the 2004 HUDP. Work on the production of what is now to be known as the Access for All SPD started prior to the new planning system coming into force and was originally intended to be adopted as an SPG. As a consequence the objectives of the SPD will need to be re-written to reflect the development of the SPD in relation to the Sustainability Appraisal Report. By being an SPD, it can be implemented beyond the three year period covered by the LDS.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

All documents produced within the Local Development Framework (LDF) are subject to a SA to inform decision-making by providing information on possible implications of policies in terms of social, environmental and economic factors. Work on the Strategic Environmental Assessment_/SA for the whole LDF process has been started in order to ensure that all considerations are integrated into all of the stages of the plan-making process, including SPDs. The SA report which has been prepared to go with the Access for All SPD therefore draws on this work and develops it as far as is relevant to the document. This is a working draft however, and will be subject to further improvement before formal public consultation.

Members are aware that other new SPDs will also be prepared and these are set out in the LDS. Work on the related Mobility and Wheelchair Housing SPD has also commenced. The draft Access for All SPD is attached as Appendix 1 and the working draft of the SA as Appendix 2.

2.2 Options considered

Due consideration has been given to several options. However, the LDS agreed by Cabinet on 23rd June identifies production of an SPD as being the most appropriate option in Harrow.

2.3 Consultation

As production of 'Access for All' began before publication of the Government's draft SA guidance, initial consultation on the document was undertaken which did not strictly reflect the guidelines now in force for producing an SPD. However, the stages for producing the SPD, as set down in the approved LDS, will follow the appropriate procedures, including the means of engagement set down in the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

2.4 Financial Implications

Costs are contained within the approved Departmental budget.

2.5 Legal Implications

(Comments included in the report)

2.6 Equalities Impact

Both the SPD and SA promote equality of opportunity and social inclusion.

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Background Documents:

1. The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. ODPM, London, October 2003
2. Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks: Consultation Paper, ODPM, September 2004
3. Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks: Interim Advise Note on Frequently Asked Questions, ODPM, London, April 2005
4. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)
5. Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
6. Part M to the Building Regulations: May 2004
7. British Standard 8300; 2001- Code of Practice
8. The London Plan (Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London), Mayor of London, February 2004.