

Factsheet 3:

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

What is an SEA and do we have to have one?

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is used to determine whether plans will have significant environmental effects and to help develop ways to deal with those effects.

Not all neighbourhood plans will need to carry out an SEA; however, all plans should be assessed to see whether an SEA is needed or not. Whether you need an SEA for your plan will largely depend on the scale and impact of the proposals in your neighbourhood plan.

It is more likely that an SEA will be required if a neighbourhood plan includes proposals relating to the location of new development and the land uses, nature, size etc of development on particular sites. Or, if the neighbourhood plan policies extend beyond the Council's current plan requirements, and beyond what has been tested in the SA/SEAs of the adopted Camden Local Plan, then the plan will likely require an SEA. Further information about the need for an SEA is also found in this [Locality](#) resource.

What the Council will do

The Council will need to be sent an early draft version of your neighbourhood plan (prior to initial 'Regulation 14' consultation) so that we can assess whether the plan will need an SEA - this is known as 'screening'. Following this, the Council will consult with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England (called the 'consultation bodies') who will consider whether they agree with our view about whether an SEA is needed.

If the Council and the consultation bodies consider that one is required you must prepare an SEA of your neighbourhood plan, alongside the preparation of your plan, to ensure it meets the basic conditions at examination. The basic conditions are addressed in Factsheet 2.

What do we have to do if an SEA is required?

If the Council determines that an SEA is needed and this view is supported by the consultation bodies, you will need to start thinking about how best to co-ordinate this part of the work to ensure that it becomes part of the development of your neighbourhood plan.

If the screening opinion sets out the need for an SEA, a full environmental report needs to be prepared. Normally this is undertaken by a planning or environmental consultant. However, the Council can review any draft materials prior to the SEA's submission to the examiner. SEAs prepared for adopted neighbourhood plans, particularly elsewhere in Camden and London, will provide forums with an idea of what is needed. Please do not hesitate to contact the Council if you have any questions relating to SEA - planningpolicy@camden.gov.uk

This factsheet should be read in conjunction with "A Guide to Preparing Neighbourhood Plans in Camden" April 2026

