

East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report

1. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under European legislation for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment.
2. The purpose of SEA is to provide a high level of protection for the environment and to integrate considerations of the environment into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.
3. The SEA process sets out criteria for assessing the significance of the impact of a plan on the environment. For example, if a plan proposes a housing development it may have an impact on the wildlife of the area or have an impact on landscape. If a significant effect is possible, the assessment requires the consideration of alternative options and for the evaluation of the potential effects on the environment.
4. To ascertain if SEA is required, a “screening” exercise is undertaken which looks at the proposals and policies in a Neighbourhood Plan to see if a significant effect on the environment is likely. The criteria for making the screening assessment are set out in the relevant legislation.
5. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a process which looks at the potential impact of proposals within a plan on European sites. In relation to the Basingstoke and Deane area the relevant European sites are a number of Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) outside of, but within 10km of the borough. New development within the part of the parish within the catchment of the River Test may also impact upon the protected habitats in the Solent.
6. The initial stage of the HRA process involves consideration of the reasons for designation and the conservation objectives of each European site within a reasonable distance of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The next stage is to consider the potential impact of the proposals within the plan on any European sites which could be affected.

7. This report details the assessment of the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan against the need for an SEA and/or HRA to be produced to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan.
8. The report is in two parts:
 - **Appendix A** is the screening report issued by the council in 2018. Following consultation with the three statutory consultees (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England), it concluded that neither an SEA nor an HRA was required.
 - **Appendix B** is an addendum to the original screening report that was finalised in June 2022. This was produced in response to new habitats considerations that had come to light on the impact of residential development in the catchment of the River Test, as part of the wider catchment of the Solent. Following consultation with the three statutory consultees (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England), the report concluded that neither an SEA nor an HRA was required.
9. When the screening reports in the appendices are taken together, it is concluded that:
 - an SEA is not considered to be required to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan; and that
 - the Neighbourhood Plan would not need to be subject to HRA.

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APPENDIX A



**Basingstoke
and Deane**

Neighbourhood Planning Screening Report – East Woodhay

**Strategic Environmental Impact
Assessment**

and

Habitats Regulations Assessment

**Final version following consideration by
consultation bodies**

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

September 2018

Appendix 1 - Environmental constraints

**Appendix 2 - Details of European sites within 10km of
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council**

**Appendix 3 - Maps of European sites within 10km of
Basingstoke and Deane Borough**

Appendix 4 - Responses from consultation bodies

1. Non-technical Summary

- 1.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under European legislation for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment.
- 1.2 The purpose of SEA is to provide a high level of protection for the environment and to integrate considerations of the environment into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.
- 1.3 The SEA process sets out criteria for assessing the significance of the impact of a plan on the environment. For example, if a plan proposes a housing development it may have an impact on the wildlife of the area or have an impact on landscape. If a significant effect is possible, the assessment requires the consideration of alternative options and for the evaluation of the potential effects on the environment.
- 1.4 To ascertain if SEA is required, a “screening” exercise is undertaken which looks at the proposals and policies in a Neighbourhood Plan to see if a significant effect on the environment is likely. The criteria for making the screening assessment are set out in the relevant legislation.
- 1.5 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a process which looks at the potential impact of proposals within a plan on what are termed ‘European sites’. In relation to the Basingstoke and Deane area the relevant European sites are a number of Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) outside of, but within 10km of the borough.
- 1.6 The initial stage of the HRA process involves consideration of the reasons for designation and the conservation objectives of each European site within a reasonable distance of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The next stage is to consider the potential impact of the proposals within the plan on any European sites which could be affected.
- 1.7 This report details the assessment of the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan against the need for an SEA and/or HRA to be produced to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan. Following consultation with the three statutory consultees (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England), it concludes that:
 - **an SEA is not considered to be required to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan; and that**
 - **the Neighbourhood Plan would not need to be subject to HRA.**

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan must comply with EU obligations. An important element of this requirement is that the borough council needs to determine whether the neighbourhood plan should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). This is an important legal requirement and a screening process in relation to this legislation should form an integral part of the neighbourhood planning process as early as possible. The main consideration will be whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects (in relation to SEA) or a significant effect on a European site (i.e. a site protected by the Habitats Directive).

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.2 The need for environmental assessment of Neighbourhood Plans stems from EU Directive 2001/42/EC – known as the SEA Directive. The SEA Directive applies to a wide range of public plans and programmes (e.g. on land use, transport, energy, waste, agriculture, etc. and includes those at the 'local level'). The SEA Directive 2001 has been transposed into English law via The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (EAPP).
- 2.3 As per the information set out in the National Planning Practice Guide, it will be necessary for the borough council to screen the proposed Neighbourhood Plan in order to determine whether the plans/programmes are likely to have significant environmental effects¹. The screening procedure is based on criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the EAPP Regulations 2004. This report assesses the Neighbourhood Plan against those criteria, and on that basis sets out whether an SEA (in the form of an Environmental Report) is required. Figure 2.1 below sets out the basic framework for establishing whether an SEA will be required.

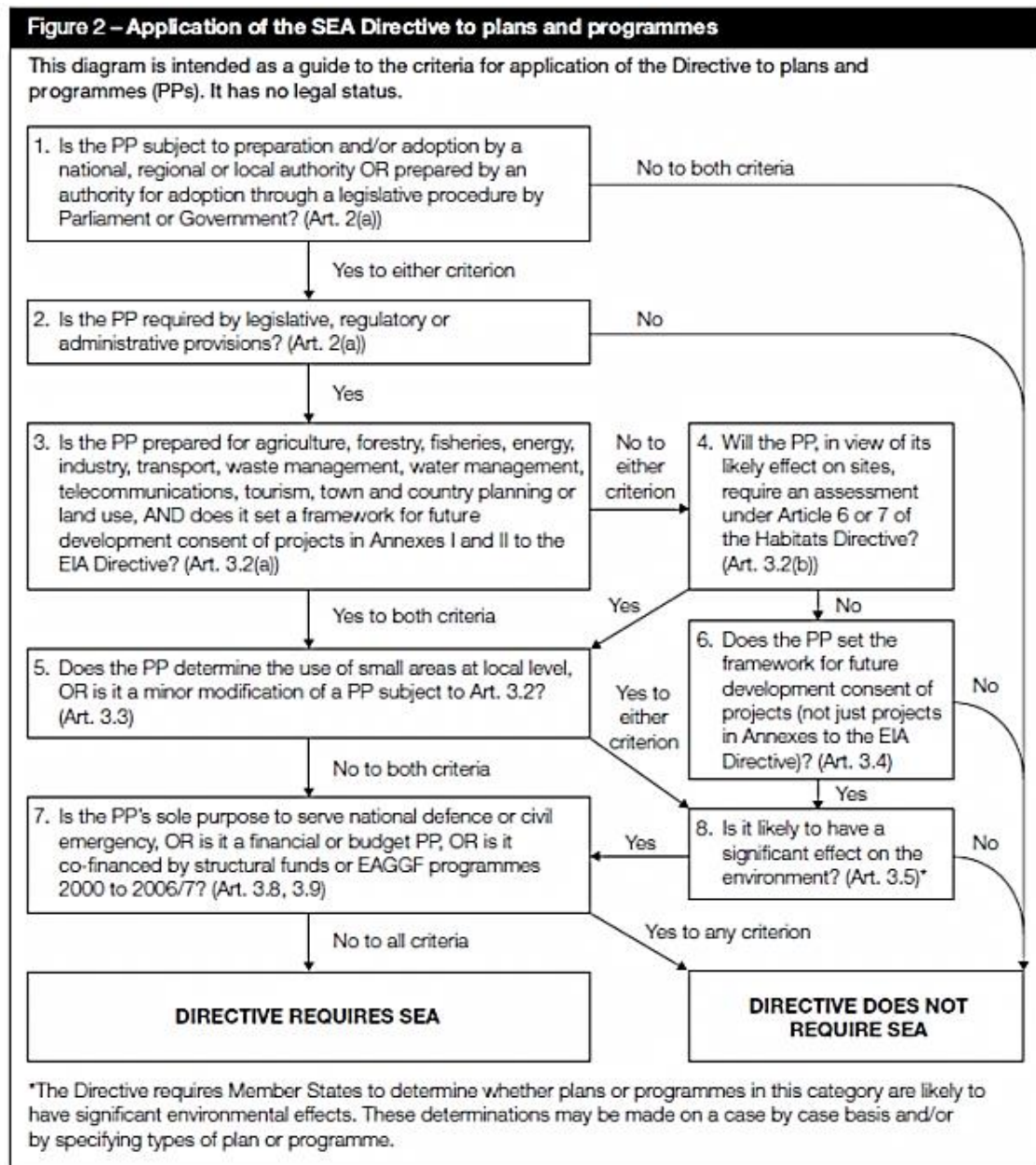
¹ The national practice guide states the following:

In some limited circumstances, where a [neighbourhood plan](#) is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Draft neighbourhood plan proposals should be assessed to determine whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This process is commonly referred to as a "screening" assessment and the requirements are set out in [regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#).

If likely significant environmental effects are identified, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with [paragraphs \(2\) and \(3\) of regulation 12 of those regulations](#).

One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the [independent examiner](#) is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is [compatible with European Union obligations](#) (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive).

Figure 2.1 – Diagram indicating whether an SEA is required for a plan or project



Habitats Regulations

- 2.4 In addition to the screening of Neighbourhood Plans in relation to SEA, there is a need to assess the likelihood of proposals or policies within a Neighbourhood Plan having an adverse impact on European sites². This Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required by the Habitats Directive as transposed into English law via The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

² In relation to the Basingstoke and Deane area, relevant European sites consist of areas designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA).

- 2.5 A Habitats Regulations Assessment may be required depending on the contents of the Neighbourhood Plan and the potential impact of the plan on European sites. A case by case assessment of Neighbourhood Plans will need to be undertaken to see if a full HRA is required. The approach to assessing the potential impact of a Neighbourhood Plan on a European site, and the need for an HRA, include consideration of the reasons for designation and conservation objectives for each site within a reasonable distance from the Neighbourhood Plan area (which was set at 10km in the borough council's Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment supporting the emerging Local Plan). Where relevant the key environmental conditions that support the site are assessed below against the proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Consultation bodies

- 2.6 Once the preliminary assessments of the need for both SEA and HRA had been undertaken, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England were consulted on the preliminary conclusions for 5 weeks between 7 August and 11 September 2018. Their responses are noted in Appendix 4 and have been taken into account in finalising this report's conclusions.

3. Generic Screening Assessment of Neighbourhood Plans

- 3.1 In the first instance, in order to establish if a Neighbourhood Plan potentially needs to be accompanied by a full SEA, a generic assessment of Neighbourhood Plans has been undertaken with the results of this assessment being set out below in Figure 3.1. The Assessment criteria set out in Figure 3.1 is derived from the government guidance produced to accompany the EAPP Regulations 2004: A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive³.
- 3.2 The assessment below illustrates that Neighbourhood Plans can be subject to the SEA Directive, and concludes that the need for an SEA in respect of any particular Neighbourhood Plan will ultimately come down to whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, Neighbourhood Plans will need to be screened on a case by case basis.

Figure 3.1 - Generic screening assessment of Neighbourhood Plans

Assessment criteria	y/n	Assessment
1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	yes	Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by parish or town councils (as the “qualifying body”) under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. Once the Plan has been prepared, and subject to examination and referendum, it will be “made” by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority
2. Is the Neighbourhood Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	It is not a requirement for a parish to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. However, a Neighbourhood Plan, once “made” does form part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used when making decisions on planning applications.

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf

3. Is the Neighbourhood Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	yes	Neighbourhood plans will cover town and country planning/land use, and may also cover other issues in the list set out. In addition, it will also set part of the framework for possible future consents covered by Annex II of the EIA Directive. Development under Annex I however, would be excluded development.
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	?	Given that there are no sites designated under the Habitats Directive in the borough, the only impact on such sites could be on those outside the borough, and any effect on those sites is unlikely given the separation distances involved. However, a case by case assessment should still be carried out and included within the screening report.
5. Does the Neighbourhood Plan Determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	yes	A Neighbourhood Plan can determine the use of small areas at the local level.
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	yes	A Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan and therefore will be used in the decision making process in relation to planning applications. The policies in a Neighbourhood Plan therefore set the framework for future development proposals.
7. Is the Neighbourhood Plan sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF(European Agricultural Guarantee Fund) programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)	No	A Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with any of these categories of plan.

8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	?	The impact of a Neighbourhood Plan on the environment will depend on the proposals and policies included. For this reason a case by case assessment of each Neighbourhood Plan will be required.
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3.3 Given that Neighbourhood Plans may be subject to the requirement for an SEA where they are likely to have a significant effect on the environment, the next step is to establish how to determine whether such effects are likely when assessing each plan on a case by case basis. The criteria for making that assessment are set out in Schedule 1 of the EAPP Regulations 2004. Please see figure 3.2 below for a full list of the relevant criteria.

3.4 The list set out below forms the basis for the full assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan in question, which is set out in section 5 below.

Figure 3.2 - Criteria for determining likely significance of effects on the environment (as per section 9 of the EAPP Regulations 2004, this list is taken from Schedule 1 of the EAPP Regulations 2004).

Schedule 1 - criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to –

(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;

(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;

(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;

(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and

(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to –

(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;

- (b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
- (c) the trans-boundary nature of the effects;
- (d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
- (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to –
 - (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
 - (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
 - (iii) intensive land-use; and
- (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

4. Description of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.1 East Woodhay is a civil parish in Hampshire within the borough of Basingstoke and Deane. The designated Neighbourhood Plan area covers the entire parish of East Woodhay, and is being prepared by the Parish Council as the qualifying body.
- 4.2. The largest settlement in the parish of East Woodhay is Woolton Hill. It also contains a number of smaller villages and hamlets including Ball Hill, Heath End, Hatt Common, North End, and East End. The majority of the parish is located within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The extent of the AONB is shown on the map in Appendix 1.

Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies

- 4.3 The draft neighbourhood plan identifies objectives relating to:
- Maintaining the rural nature of the parish by ensuring a balance between countryside, agriculture, business and housing;
 - Ensuring separation between the communities within the parish and preserve the distinct characteristics of the different communities;
 - Protecting and enhancing green infrastructure. Projects such as the introduction of additional accessible green space, woodland, footpaths, green corridors and cycleways will be encouraged, as will the inclusion of green space within any developments;
 - Protecting, enhancing and conserving the AONB, landscape and views;
 - New developments reflecting community need, with particular emphasis on smaller homes to meet the needs of newly formed households and those wishing to downsize;
 - Prioritising affordable housing in the parish for local people; and
 - Protecting the viability of a local businesses.
- 4.4 In light of the above the following policies are currently being proposed:
- Policy that directs new development to within the settlement policy boundary (which would be amended to include a recent development site);
 - A housing mix policy to encourage smaller dwellings and homes for older people;
 - Design policies for Woolton Hill and the hamlets;
 - Rural exception site policy;
 - Protection of community facilities;
 - Green Infrastructure Network policy which seeks to designate, protect and enhance a green infrastructure network;

- Designation and protection of Local Green Spaces;
- A policy for local heritage assets addressing new developments, extensions and alterations;
- Protection of key views which seeks to protect specific views identified in the plan;
- Environmental protection policy to ensure development does not damage or result in the loss of trees or hedgerows; and
- Dark skies policy which aims to limit light pollution.

5. SEA Screening Assessment

- 5.1 At this stage in the Neighbourhood Planning process it is difficult to know exactly what will be proposed in the final version of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the approximate parameters of the development and policies being proposed for inclusion in the draft Neighbourhood Plan, as set out in Section 4 of this report, have been used to undertake this screening assessment.
- 5.2 If it is found that an SEA is required in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan, any changes to the quantum of development can be assessed for environmental impact through the SEA process. If the conclusion of a screening exercise is that an SEA is not required, any changes to the quantum of development and/or policies being proposed should be subject to a further screening assessment to ensure that significant effects are not likely.
- 5.3 Under Criteria 8 of the assessment in Figure 3.1, it was concluded that Neighbourhood Plans may have a significant effect on the environment depending on the specific policies and proposals within it and that a case by case assessment is required. The criteria for undertaking such an assessment are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. Figure 5.1 below outlines the results of this assessment against the Annex II parameters.

SEA Assessment of neighbourhood plan

Figure 5.1 - Assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	The Neighbourhood Plan will set a framework for various types of projects and activities, and in so doing will influence the size, location and operating conditions of the development in question. The policies in the Plan will also set criteria which will be applied to planning applications.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	Though unlikely, the Plan could inform supplementary planning documents (such as design guidance), development briefs or site specific guidance.

(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	The Plan will have regard to the objective of achieving sustainable development in the local area. It will be in conformity with the strategic policies in the Adopted Local Plan 2011-2029.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	The Plan will seek to address environmental, economic and social issues in the neighbourhood area.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The Plan is relevant to various aspects of Community legislation, such as environmental protection and conservation of biodiversity.
Characteristics of the effects likely having regard, in particular, to:	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The Plan will set the local vision, objectives and policies to guide new development in neighbourhood area. It is likely to result in long-term effects associated with changes to land use and physical development of land.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	There are likely to be some fairly limited local cumulative effects arising from and between the different proposals and policies in the Plan, and those in the adopted Local Plan.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	There will be no transboundary effects (in relation to other EU member states).
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);	There are unlikely to be any significant risks to human health, though there is a limited risk of harm to the environment during construction works.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The magnitude of the effects will be regulated by the relatively small number of units likely to be supported by the Plan, meaning the effects are likely to be largely localised (i.e. within the neighbourhood area). However, there could be limited effects over a moderately larger area in relation to issues such as landscape impact and highways.

(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to – . (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; . (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or . (iii) intensive land-use; and	There are various parts of the Neighbourhood Area which are both highly valued and vulnerable, namely the Conservation Areas. There are also Listed Buildings which could be affected (in terms of setting).
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The majority of the neighbourhood area is within an AONB, however the Plan is not allocating sites, or proposing significant new development that could affect the importance of that landscape or its setting.

5.4 As a result of the analysis undertaken to assess the effects on the environment resulting from the Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that significant effects on the environmental are not likely.

5.5 The National Planning Practice Guide (NPPG) states that:

“In some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment.”

5.6 The NPPG sets out the following matters for consideration when assessing whether an SEA is required in connection with any particular neighbourhood plan:

“Whether a neighbourhood plan requires a strategic environmental assessment, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft neighbourhood plan. A strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:

- *a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development*
- *the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan*
- *the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.”⁴*

5.7 In relation to the considerations set out above in the national level planning guidance the following factors are considered to be particularly pertinent. Firstly, the neighbourhood plan does not allocate any development sites. The plan directs development to within the Settlement Policy Boundary of Woolton Hill, and seeks to restrict development in the countryside.

⁴ Paragraph: 046 Reference ID: 11-046-20150209

- 5.8 The majority of the neighbourhood area is within a ‘sensitive area’ – the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A number of policies within the plan seek to protect the landscape including a policy that seeks to protect specific key views, and design policies which seek to ensure development is appropriately designed to reduce impact on the landscape and AONB. A dark skies policy seeks to minimise light pollution.
- 5.9 There is a small area of Flood Zone 2 and 3 located in the north of the parish. There are no policies in the Neighbourhood Plan relating to flooding (this is covered by Local Plan Policy EM7), however due to the small scale nature of the development it is not envisaged that these will be affected by the plan.
- 5.10 In terms of heritage, there are two designated conservation areas in the neighbourhood area at North End and West End. There are also a number of listed buildings within the parish. A local heritage assets policy is proposed which will seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. There are also design policies which would be applied to hamlets in the parish including North End and West End (where the conservation areas are located) to ensure development is designed at an appropriate scale and is in keeping with existing development.
- 5.11 Whilst these are important environmental, landscape and heritage factors, it is considered that due to the limited scope of the Plan (without site allocations), and the policy framework within it (with the protection provided by the specific policies), the Plan will not result in a significant effect on the environment.
- 5.12 Therefore, in light of the above, and when considered in the context of the fact the NPPG states that an SEA is only likely to be required in ‘some limited circumstances’, it is considered that significant effects on the environment are not likely and hence an SEA is not required.

6. HRA Screening Assessment

- 6.1 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the assessment required for any plan or project to assess the potential implications for what are termed 'European sites'. Such sites consist of areas designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). There is also an international designation known as RAMSAR sites, which whilst being covered by different legislation should be subject to the same consideration as European sites.
- 6.2 There are no European sites in the borough. However, there are a number of SPAs and SACs located outside of the borough which could be affected by development taking place within the Basingstoke and Deane borough (please see Appendix 2 for the details of those areas). Therefore, it is still necessary to consider whether there could be any potential impact on European sites stemming from neighbourhood planning.
- 6.3 European sites are offered the highest level of protection under European law and the consequent national legislation transposing it into English law (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, known as the Habitats Regulations). The Habitats Regulations sets out the process to assess the potential implications of a Neighbourhood Plan on European sites.
- 6.4 The first stage is to screen the Neighbourhood Plan in order to establish whether it may have a significant effect on a European site. Only if there may be such an effect will it be necessary to undertake a process called 'appropriate assessment'⁵ in relation to a European site.
- 6.5 In undertaking the screening to establish whether there will be a significant effect, the 'precautionary principle' will need to be followed. The requirement to adhere to the precautionary approach is established by case law and clarified by European Union and domestic government guidance⁶. The use of the precautionary principle requires that when considering the likelihood of a possible effect on a European site it will

⁵ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

61.—(1) A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which—

(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and

(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site, must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

⁶ Landelijke Vereniging tot Behoud van de Waddenzee v. Secretary of State for Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Fisheries (Case C127/02), ECJ 7/9/04

be assumed that such impacts will occur if there is insufficient evidence to the contrary.

6.6 In carrying out the screening assessment, the borough council has addressed the various requirements set out in the European Commission guidance⁷. The guidance sets out various steps which need to be followed:

- i) description of project or plan
- ii) characteristics of the European site
- iii) assessment of significance

The description of the Neighbourhood Plan has been set out in section 4 above. Therefore, this section focuses on the characteristics of any relevant European sites, their significance, and ultimately whether there are likely to be any significant effects.

6.7 The Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Local Plan has been subject to a Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment. This contains a detailed assessment of each of the 8 European sites within 10km of the borough boundary. These are set out in Appendix 2 below, and inform the assessment process documented in this report. Appendix 3 includes maps of these sites, also taken from the Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment.

6.8 The implications of the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan have been assessed against each of the European sites within 10km of the neighbourhood area boundary in order to establish the likelihood of a significant effect on the reason for designation of the European site in question. This assessment has been undertaken having regard to the results and information in the HRA screening assessment prepared for the emerging Local Plan for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, and in the light of the relevant European Commission guidance (as referred to above), which forms the basis for the assessment criteria set out below.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_assess_en.pdf
Pages 18 - 23

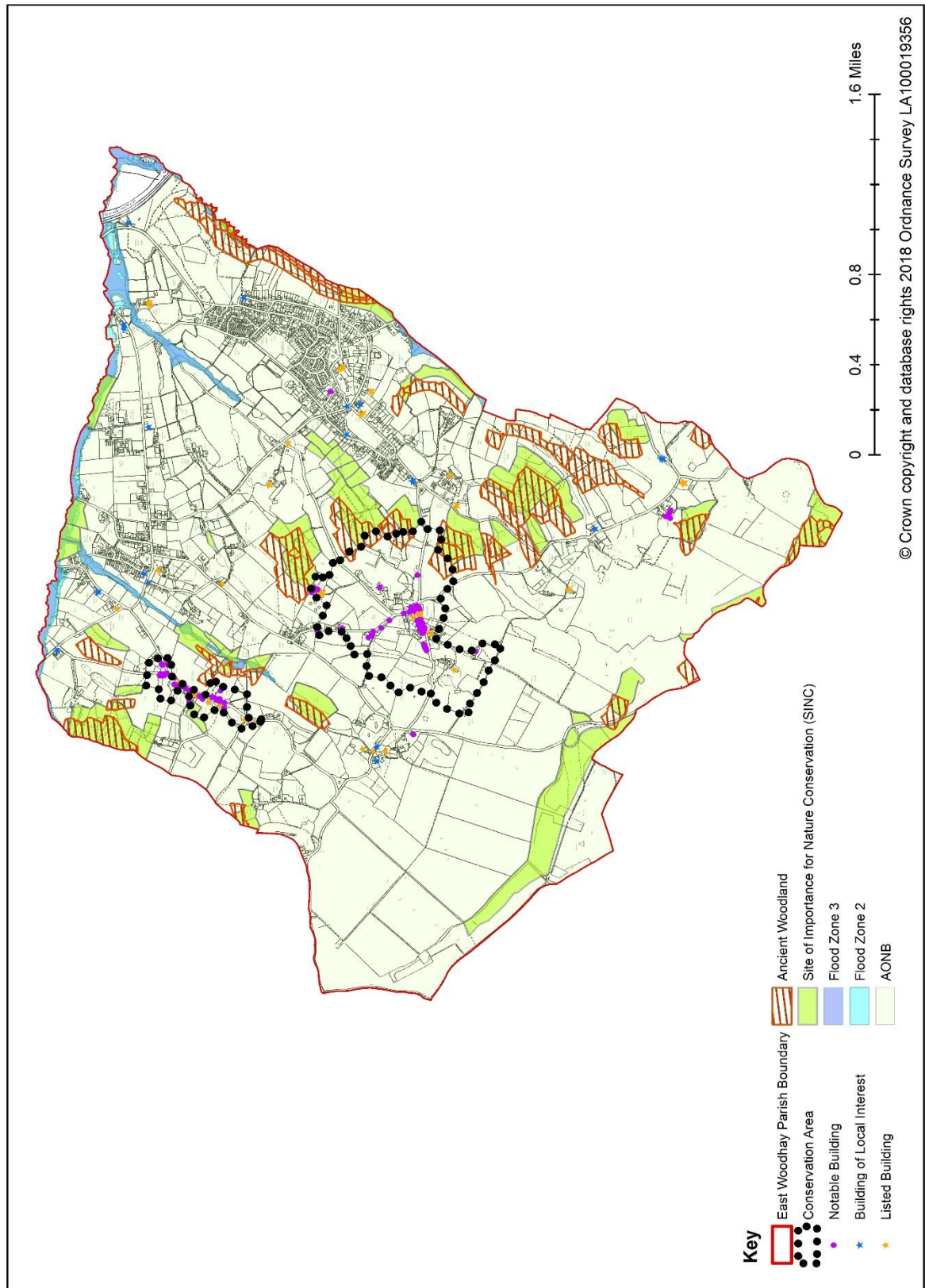
Assessments of any European sites with 10km of the neighbourhood area

- 6.9 The Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC and the Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC European sites are within a 10km radius of the neighbourhood area. The draft plan is not proposing to allocate any development sites and includes policies to protect the natural environment therefore, it is considered that there are not likely to be significant effects on any European sites flowing from the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This report contains the assessment as to whether the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to the requirement for the submission of an Environmental Report as required by the EAPP Regulations 2004 and/or Appropriate Assessment as required by the Habitats Regulations 2017.
- 7.2 The assessment for both of these requirements has been undertaken on the basis of proposals and policies outlined in Section 4 of this report and within the strategic framework established by the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 7.3 The Local Authority's conclusion is that based on the above assessment, **a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required** and **the plan would not be subject to Habitat Regulations Assessment.**

Appendix 1 – Environmental Constraints



Appendix 2 – Details of European sites within 10km of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Thames Basin Heaths SPA

Introduction

The Thames Basin Heaths cover an area of 8,400 hectares and comprise a rare example of lowland heathland across Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire. The heaths support significant populations of 3 important bird species and consist of 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Hazeley Heath SSSI is the nearest part of the SPA to the borough (located within 5km of the borough boundary).

Due to the size, location and nature of this site and the surrounding development pressure, English Nature published a draft Delivery Plan for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA in May 2006. This was updated by the „Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Delivery Framework“ published in January 2009 (Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board). The document sets out a strategic approach for development by providing a consistent method through which local authorities can meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations through avoidance and mitigation measures.

Features of European Interest

Annex I birds and regularly occurring migratory birds not listed on Annex I:

- *Caprimulgus europaeus* (nightjar)
- *Lullula arborea* (woodlark)
- *Sylvia undata* (Dartford warbler)

Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

The mosaic of habitats which form the internationally important lowland heathland are dependent on active heathland management. Lack of grazing and other traditional management practices therefore pose a threat.

Development pressure on neighbouring land, urbanisation issues and the cumulative and indirect effects of neighbouring developments also pose a potential long-term problem. A strategic approach to accommodating development whilst ensuring compatibility with the Habitats Regulations is being addressed through the Thames Basin Heaths Area Based Delivery Project. This seeks to address the detrimental impacts of recreational pressure, particularly dog walking, on ground nesting bird populations.

Wealden Heaths phase II SPA

Introduction

The Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA is located across the counties of Surrey, Hampshire and West Sussex and comprises 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, namely Woolmer Forest SSSI and SAC, Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI, Bramshott and Ludshott Commons SSSI and Devil's Punchbowl SSSI. A small area to the south east of the borough is located within 10km of the SPA.

Features of European Interest

Annex I birds and regularly occurring migratory birds not listed on Annex I:

- *Caprimulgus europaeus* (nightjar)
- *Lullula arborea* (woodlark)
- *Sylvia undata* (Dartford warbler)

Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

The heathland habitats of the Special Protection Area are very dependent upon grazing and other traditional management practices. The SPA is vulnerable to urbanisation issues, fly tipping and heathland fires and there is increasing pressure for development associated with military training activities. Formal and informal recreation activities are a potential threat to the breeding success of Annex 1 birds. The heaths are also dependent on high water tables to maintain their features of interest, and are therefore sensitive to any potential lowering of water levels due to water abstraction. In the most recent condition assessment process, parts of the heathland were not in favourable condition, with concerns about inappropriate vegetation species, vehicle damage and invasive species.

East Hampshire Hangers SAC

Introduction

The East Hampshire Hangers SAC is a large complex of predominantly broadleaved deciduous woodland comprising seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

- Upper Greensand Hangers: Wyck to Wheatley
- Wick Wood and Worldham Hangers
- Coombe Wood and The Lythe
- Selborne Common
- Noar Hill
- Wealden Edge Hangers
- Upper Greensand Hangers: Empshott to Hawkley

Features of European Interest

The East Hampshire Hangers qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites: Noar Hill in particular, has an outstanding assemblage of orchids, including one of the largest UK populations of the nationally scarce musk orchid *Herminium monorchis*;
- Beech forests on neutral to rich soils: the site is extremely rich in terms of vascular plants;
- Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes: along with Rook Clift SAC, in the south-east of England, this habitat is only represented here;
- Dry grasslands or scrublands on chalk or limestone (though not a primary reason for site selection);
- Yew-dominated woodland (though not a primary reason for site selection).

Secondly, the site contains the Habitats Directive Annex II species early gentian *Gentianella anglica* and *Triturus cristatus* (great crested newt).

The key environmental conditions that have been defined for this site are:

- Maintenance of grazing;
- Absence of direct fertilisation; and
- Low nutrient runoff from surrounding land although the Hanger woodlands are vulnerable to nutrient run-off leading to eutrophication;
- Minimal air pollution – nitrogen deposition may cause reduction in diversity, sulphur deposition can cause acidification;
- Well-drained soils.

Key environmental conditions / vulnerability of the site

Being steep and narrow, the Hanger woodlands are vulnerable to nutrient runoff from adjacent agricultural land, leading to eutrophication and growth of ruderal vegetation when, for example neglected coppice is cut. Within the Hangers over-maturity and outbreaks of beech disease have been observed. Management is hampered by sparse mast years, few seed trees, the presence of deep litter layers and difficulties in extracting felled timber due to the steep slopes present.

Natural England will be exploring mechanisms that can be put in place to curtail damaging agricultural activities in the vicinity of the site. Natural England is liaising closely with the Forestry Commission regarding positive management of these woodlands through Woodland Grant Schemes and, for example, the Challenge Fund.

Kennet & Lambourne Floodplain SAC

Introduction

The Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC is a composite site of approximately 114 hectares located within West Berkshire and Wiltshire. The site has the general character of 59% bogs, marshes and water fringed vegetation, 40% humid and Mesophile grassland, and 1% standing or running water.

The cluster of sites selected in the Kennet and Lambourn valleys support one of the most extensive known populations of Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*) in the UK. The conservation objective related to the sites' designation is to maintain in favourable condition, the habitat for the population of Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*).

Features of European Interest

The Kennet and Lambourne Floodplain SAC qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- ☐ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitrichio-Batrachion* vegetation

Secondly, the site contains the Habitats Directive Annex II species:

- ☐ *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey)
- ☐ *Cottus gobio* (bullhead)

Key environmental conditions / vulnerability of the site

The River Lambourn has one of the least modified catchments in southern England and has one of the lowest levels of abstraction. Water quality, water quantity and habitat quality are all considered to be high. However, localised higher water nutrient levels and siltation problems are at present associated with sewage treatment works. Natural England and the Environment Agency have produced an agreed protocol for dealing with issues affecting the river.

Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC

Introduction

The Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC consists of two sites of approximately 56 hectares in total located within West Berkshire in the Kennet floodplain. Its general site characteristic is of broad leaved deciduous woodland. The woodlands are the largest remaining fragments of damp, ash-alder woodland in the Kennet floodplain area. The conservation of the site is dependent upon maintaining a constantly high groundwater level.

Features of European Interest

The Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC qualify as a SAC for containing the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno- Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)

Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

The conservation interest of the site is critically dependent upon maintenance of constantly high groundwater levels. However, there are no known threats to groundwater levels. The site is subject to low levels of intervention and natural processes are allowed to prevail to a large extent. A Woodland Grant Scheme is in place which favours the maintenance of the characteristic alder woodland composition.

River Itchen SAC

Introduction

The River Itchen is a chalk river that rises from the chalk aquifer of the Hampshire Downs (near Alresford) and flows through Winchester to join the Solent at Southampton. It hosts a number of habitats which support nationally and internationally important plants and animals. These require certain water levels with little variation over the course of a year, and fast flow rates. The whole river, including its three headwater tributaries, are designated as a SSSI.

Features of European Interest

The River Itchen SAC qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachium* vegetation

Secondly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex II species:

- *Vertigo moulinsiana* (Desmoulin's whorl snail)
- *Coenagrion mercuriale* (Southern damselfly)
- *Austropotamobius pallipes* (white-clawed crayfish)
- *Petromyzon marinus*
- *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey)
- *Lampetra fluviatilis*
- *Salmo salar* (atlantic salmon)
- *Cottus gobio* (bullhead)
- *Lutra lutra* (otter)

Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

The river's ecology depends on maintaining a uniform, fast flow of water. A principal threat to the habitats within this SAC is considered to be the decrease in flow velocities and increase in siltation, in turn affecting macrophyte cover. Recent surveys have shown declines in *Ranunculus* cover since 1990, attributable to increased abstractions in the upper catchment,

coupled with a series of years with below-average rainfall. Low flows interact with nutrient inputs from point sources to produce localised increases in filamentous algae and nutrient-tolerant macrophytes at the expense of *Ranunculus*.

The Environment Agency is initiating a major study of the river's macrophytes, from which a predictive model will be developed which will aid decisions on whether to reduce water abstraction at critical times. Efforts are currently being made to increase the viability of the southern damselfly population through population studies and a Species Action Plan.

River Lambourn SAC

Introduction

The River Lambourn SAC consists of the River Lambourn water body over an area of 27 hectares. The River Lambourn rises in the chalk of the Berkshire Downs, is 26 km long, and flows through the Kennet Valley to Newbury where it joins the River Kennet. It has one important tributary, the Winterbourne stream, which flows into the Lambourn from the north-east, just upstream of Newbury. It is also a designated SSSI.

Features of European Interest

The River Lambourn SAC qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitans* and *Callitriche-Batrachium* vegetation

Secondly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex II species:

- *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey)
- *Cottus gobio* (bullhead)

Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

The River Lambourn has one of the least modified catchments in southern England and has one of the lowest levels of abstraction. Water quality, water quantity and habitat quality are all considered to be high. However, localised higher water nutrient levels and siltation problems are at present associated with sewage treatment works. Natural England and the Environment Agency have produced an agreed protocol for dealing with issues affecting the river.

Shortheath Common SAC

Introduction

Shortheath Common is a heathland site located on the western Weald. It comprises a single SSSI which covers approximately 58 hectares. The site was historically grazed but now is recovering from the encroachment of scrub.

Features of European Interest

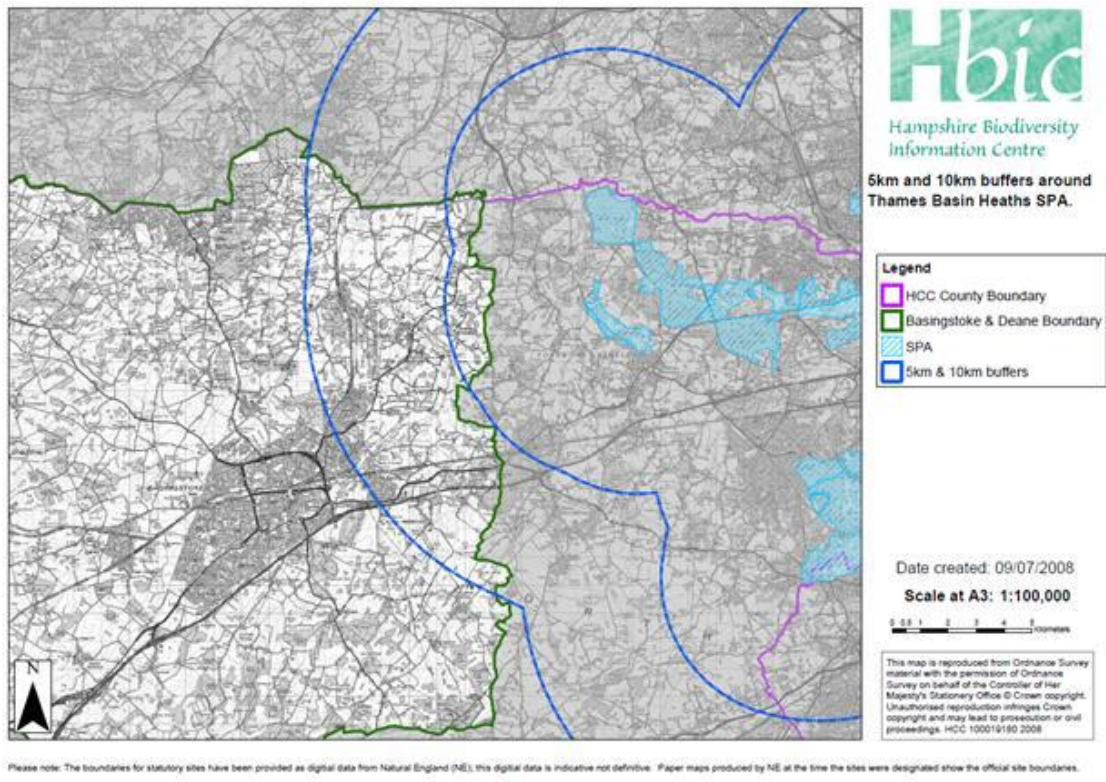
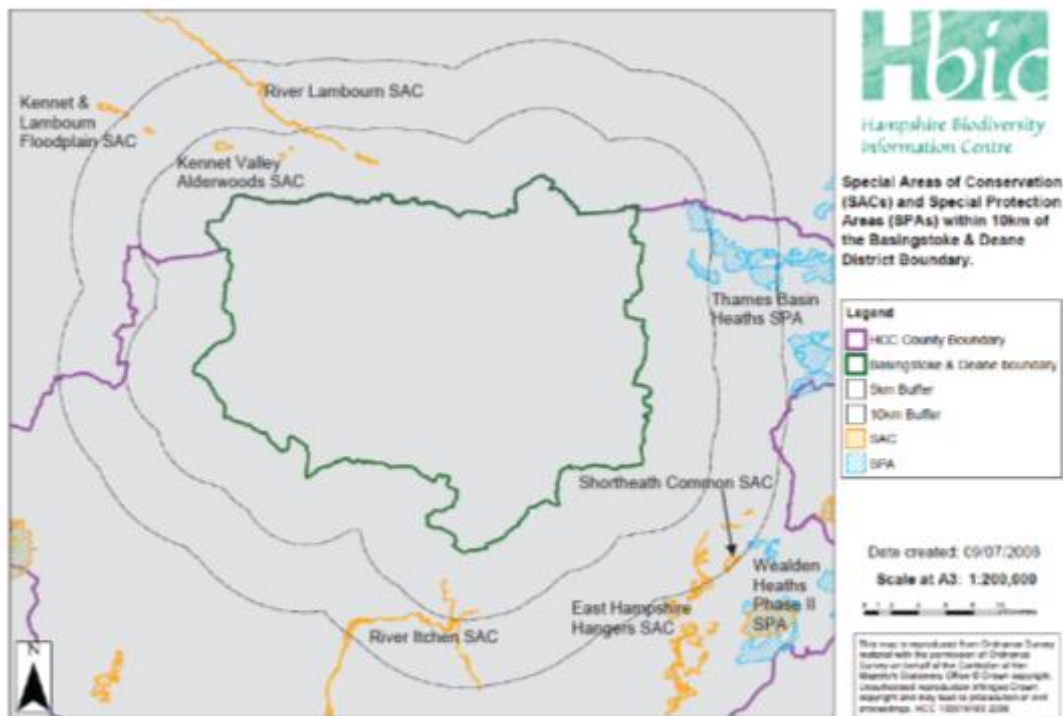
The Shortheath Common SAC qualifies as a SAC for containing the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

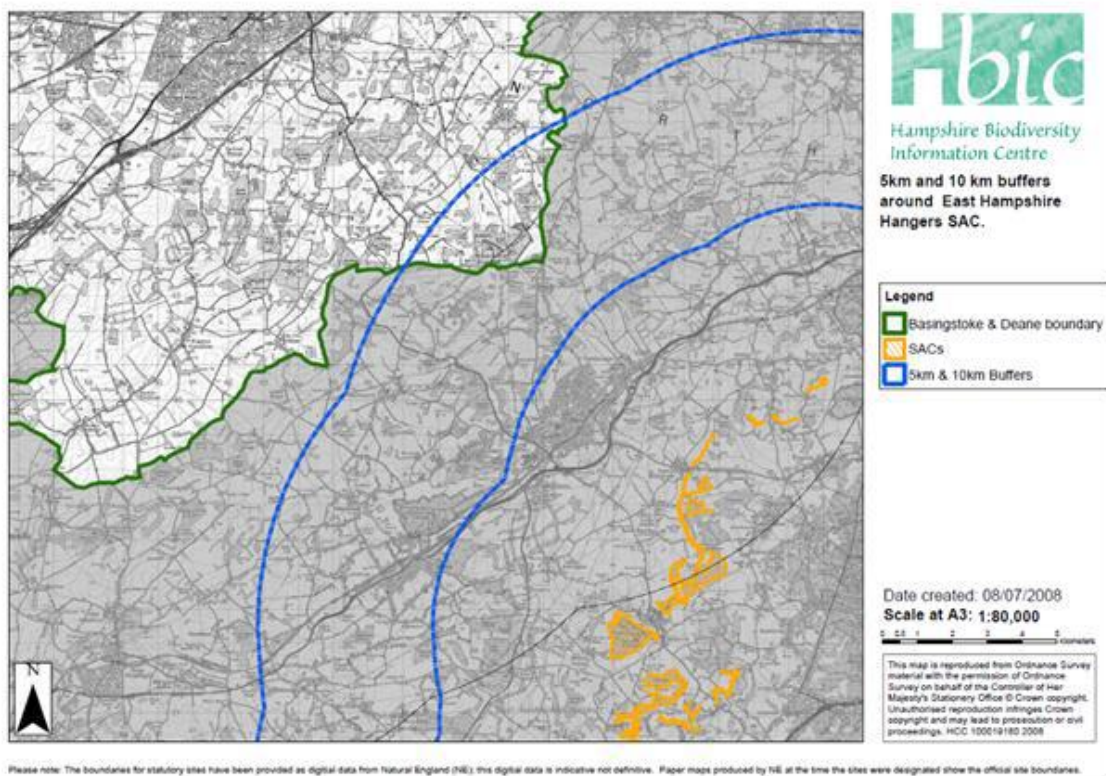
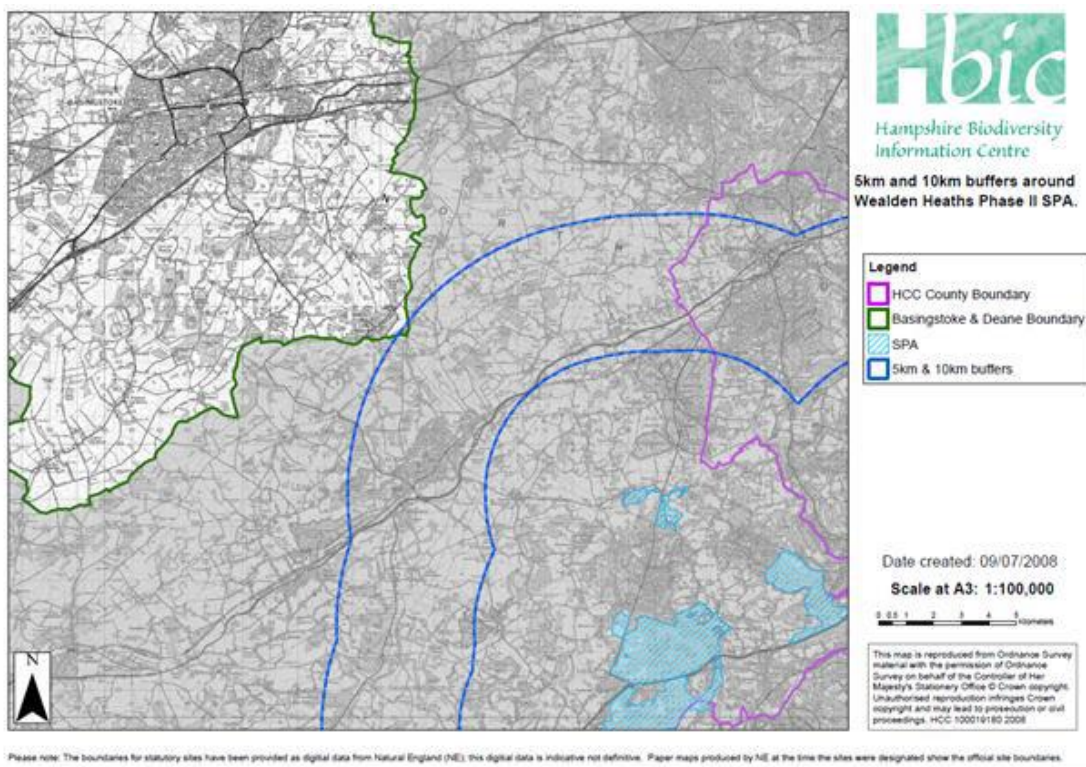
- Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- European dry heaths
- Transition mires and quaking bogs
- Bog woodland

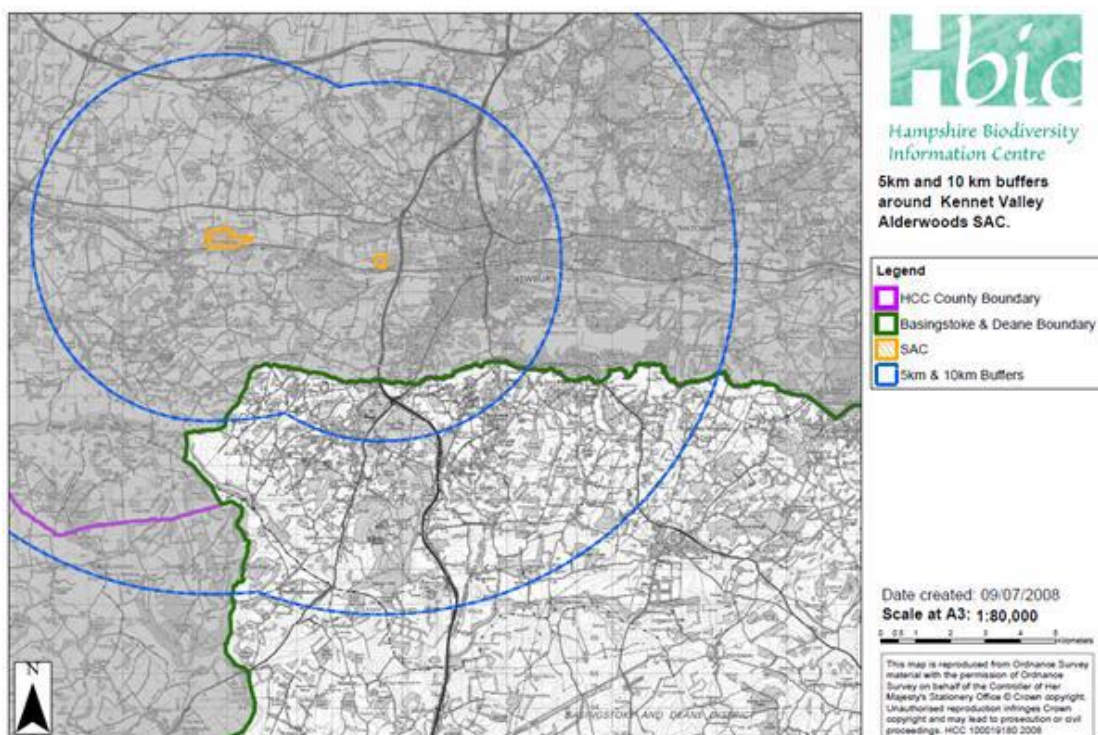
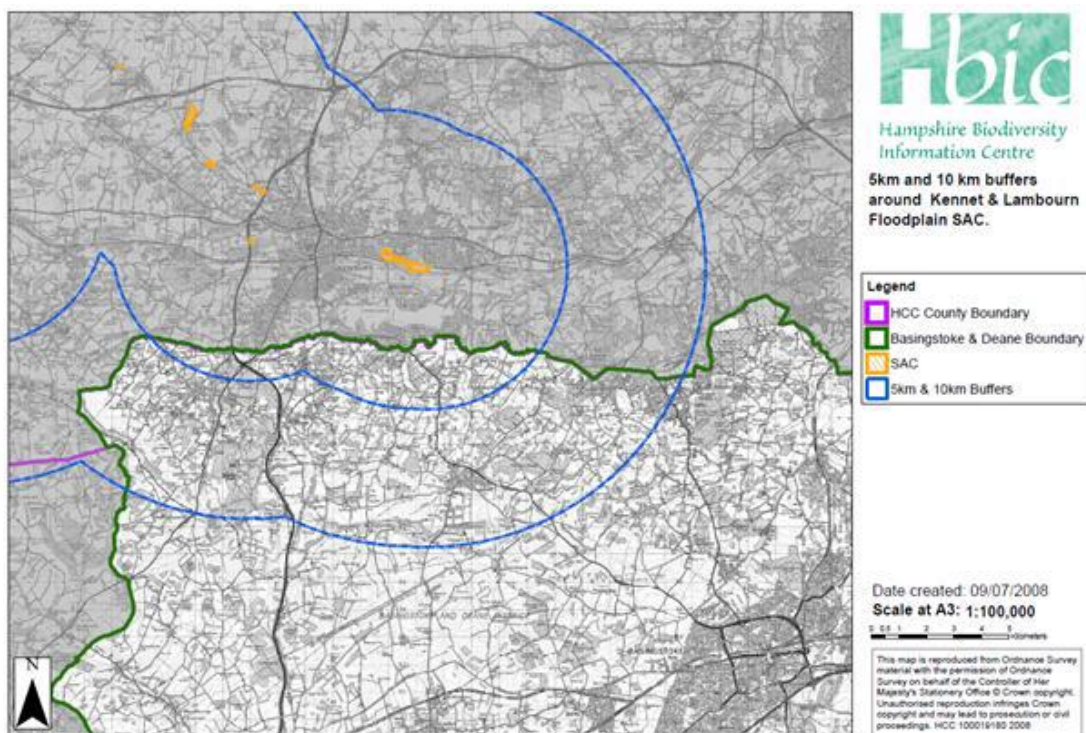
Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

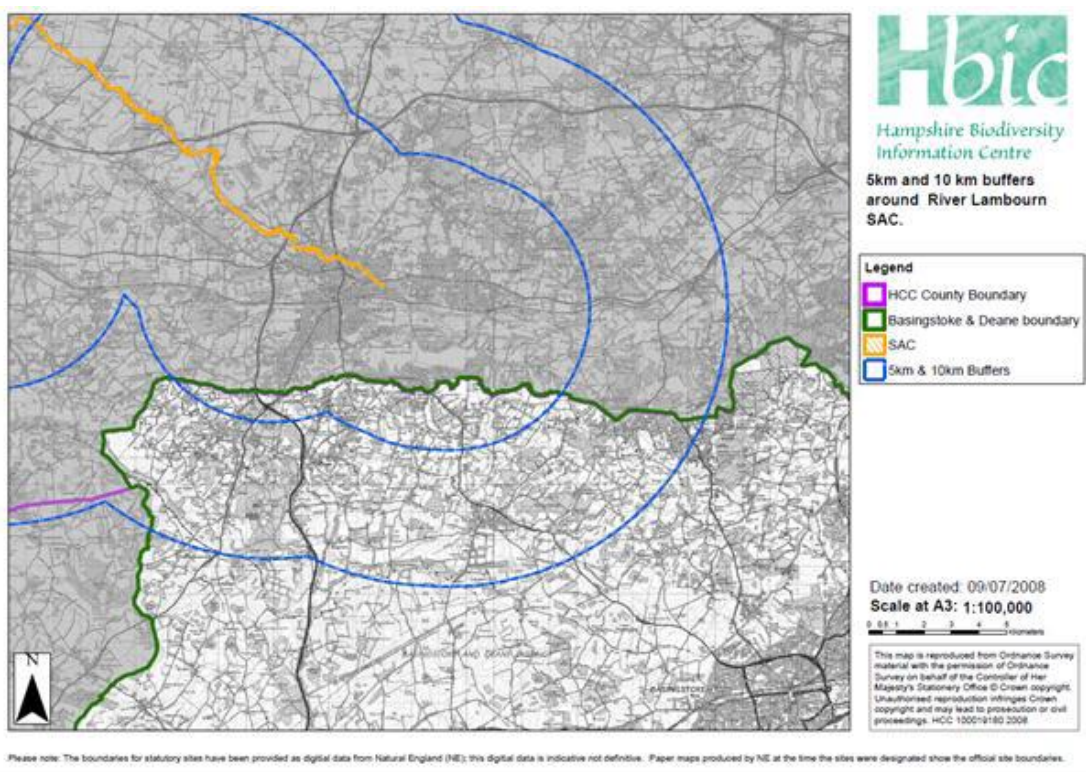
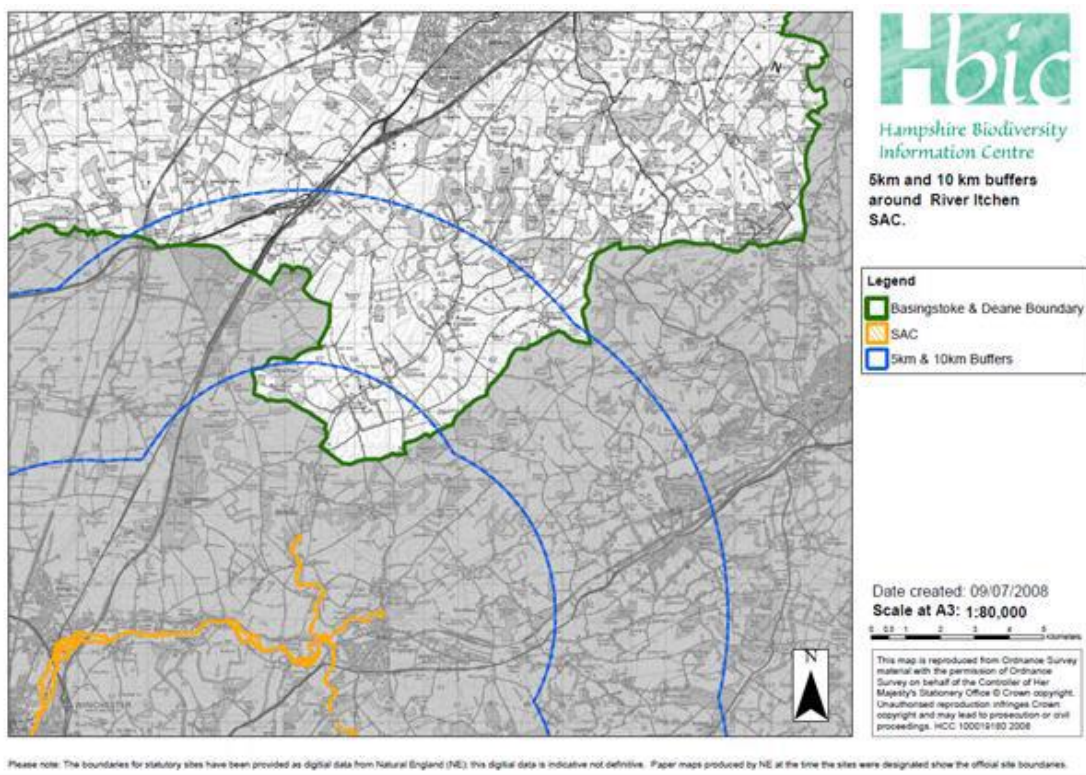
The site is vulnerable to encroachment of invasive scrub and trees due to cessation of traditional grazing management. Erosional risk and fire are also threats. A Natural England Wildlife Enhancement Scheme agreement has been entered into in an attempt to address the ecological deterioration. The heaths are also dependent on high water tables to maintain their features of interest, and are therefore sensitive to any potential lowering of water levels due to water abstraction. Protection of the site therefore relies on careful management of water levels and recreational activities and good air quality.

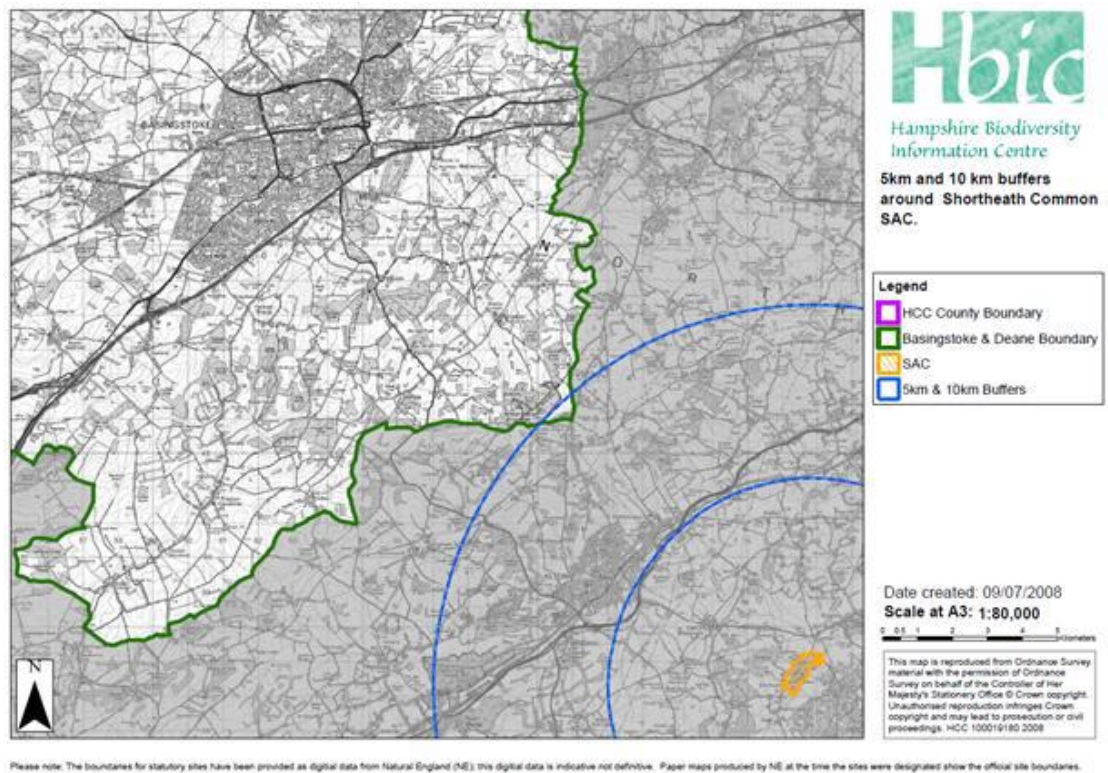
Appendix 3 - Maps of European sites within 10km of Basingstoke and Deane Borough












(Source for all: Basingstoke and Deane Pre-Submission Local Plan Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment)


Appendix 4: Responses from consultation bodies


1. Environment Agency



Tue 07/08/2018 15:32

Planning_THM <Planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk>
RE: Draft SEA screening for East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan (Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council)

To  Robyn Kelly

 Follow up. Start by 07 August 2018. Due by 07 August 2018.
You forwarded this message on 07/08/2018 16:18.

**** PLEASE NOTE: This message has originated from a source external to Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council, and has been scanned for viruses. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council reserves the right to store and monitor e-mails ****

Dear Robyn Kelly,

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the SEA screening opinion for East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan.






We regret that at present, the Thames Area Sustainable Places team is unable to review this consultation. This is due to resourcing issues within the team, a high development management workload and an increasing volume of neighbourhood planning consultations. We have had to prioritise our limited resource, and must focus on influencing plans where the environmental risks and opportunities are highest. For the purposes of neighbourhood planning, we have assessed those authorities who have "up to date" local plans (plans adopted since 2012, or which have been confirmed as being compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework) as being of lower risk. At this time, therefore, we are unable to make any detailed input on neighbourhood plans being prepared within this local authority area.

However, together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission, we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf


Thames Sustainable Places Team
Environment Agency | Red Kite House, Wallingford, OX10 8BD

Planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk

Speak to us early about environmental issues and opportunities - We can provide a free pre-application advice note or for more detailed advice / meetings / reviews we can provide a project manager to coordinate specialist advice / meetings which costs £100 per hour plus 20% VAT. For more information email us at planning_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk



Creating a better place
for people and wildlife



2. Historic England



Historic England

Robyn Kelly
Planning Policy Officer
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Civic Offices
London Road
Basingstoke
Hampshire, RG21 4AH.

Our ref: HD/P5229/
Your ref:
Telephone 01483 252040
Fax

8th September 2018

Dear Robyn,

East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA Screening Opinion

Thank you for your e-mail of 21st August seeking the views of Historic England on whether or not the policies and proposals of the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan are likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore whether or not the Plan should be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

We note from the Council's draft Screening Opinion that the Plan area contains two designated conservation areas at North End and West End. According to the National Heritage List for England there are 37 listed buildings within the parish and it also potentially contains a number of locally important heritage assets. It is therefore a reasonably sensitive historic environment.

We further note from the Draft Opinion that the Plan does not allocate any sites for housing development. Nor does it appear, from the information currently available to us, to introduce a presumption in favour of development where none currently applies – we note that the Settlement Policy Boundary for Woolton Hill is already identified in the Council's Local Plan.

Accordingly, Historic England considers that, based on the information currently available to us, the policies and proposals of the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to have significant effects on the (historic) environment of the Plan area and that, therefore, the Plan need not be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

We therefore concur with the Council's draft Opinion. However, we may wish to revise our opinion when we have a chance to see the draft Plan.

We hope these comments are helpful. Please contact me if you have any queries.

Thank you again for consulting Historic England.



Historic England, Eastgate Court, 195-205 High Street, Guildford GU1 3EH
Telephone 01483 25 2020 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.




- 2 -


Yours sincerely,


Martin Small
Principal Adviser, Historic Environment Planning
(Bucks, Oxon, Berks, Hampshire, IoW, South Downs National Park and Chichester)
E-mail: martin.small@historicengland.org.uk

3. Natural England



Mon 20/08/2018 13:07
Clemson, Rachael (NE) <Rachael.Clemson@naturalengland.org.uk>
Re: 254691 Draft SEA screening for East Woodhay NP

To  Robyn Kelly

 Follow up. Start by 20 August 2018. Due by 20 August 2018.

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Dear Robyn

Natural England's opinion is that we concur with the screening assessments and conclusions in the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA assessment report dated August 2018. Natural England does not have any further specific comments on this screening report.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks,
Rachael

Rachael Clemson
Solent Planning Adviser
Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Area Team

Mobile : 07500 954264
Tel: 02080261472

Please note my non-working day is Friday

www.naturalengland.org.uk

We are here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

Please send planning consultations to Natural England by email to: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england

Natural England offers two chargeable services – The Discretionary Advice Service ([DAS](#)) provides pre-application, pre-determination and post-consent advice on proposals to developers and consultants as well as pre-licensing species advice and pre-assent and consent advice. The Pre-submission Screening Service ([PSS](#)) provides advice for protected species mitigation licence applications.

APPENDIX B

East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

Screening Report Addendum

Finalised June 2022 (following responses from consultation bodies)

Introduction

1. The East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan was screened for the need for a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) [in September 2018](#). This work concluded that neither an SEA nor an HRA was required.
2. Since the screening assessment was undertaken, new habitats considerations have come to light in relation to the impact of residential development in the catchment of the Rivers Test and Itchen, as part of the wider catchment of the Solent. Natural England has advised that development in this area could have significant effects on:
 - Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site,
 - Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC),
 - Solent and Dorset Coast Special Protection Area, and
 - Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons Special Protection Area.
3. Natural England's guidance on the matter and the council's position statement, can be viewed [here](#). In summary, any new overnight accommodation that discharges wastewater to the River Test and Itchen catchment could have potential significant effects on these protected Habitats Sites and such development will be required to demonstrate nutrient neutrality in order to demonstrate that there is no adverse impact on the nature conservation sites.
4. East Woodhay Parish Council [submitted their Plan](#) in March 2022, and the LPA carried out consultation under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) in March-May 2022. A very small part of the Neighbourhood Plan Area is within the zone where new development could affect these protected habitats.
5. This report therefore provides an addendum to the SEA and HRA screening report (September 2018) to consider the impact of the plan upon these protected habitats. This report should be considered in conjunction with the original SEA and HRA screening document.

Description of Project or Plan

6. East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by East Woodhay Parish Council and covers the entire parish of East Woodhay. Once adopted the Neighbourhood Plan would form part of the Development Plan. The plan includes a range of policies relating to issues such as housing (including housing mix), employment, landscape and important views, local heritage and community facilities. The Plan does not allocate new housing sites and seeks to protect the rural area by directing new development to within the Woolton Hill Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB).
7. As shown below, a small part of the Neighbourhood Planning Area is within the catchment of the River Test and the catchment of the Solent.

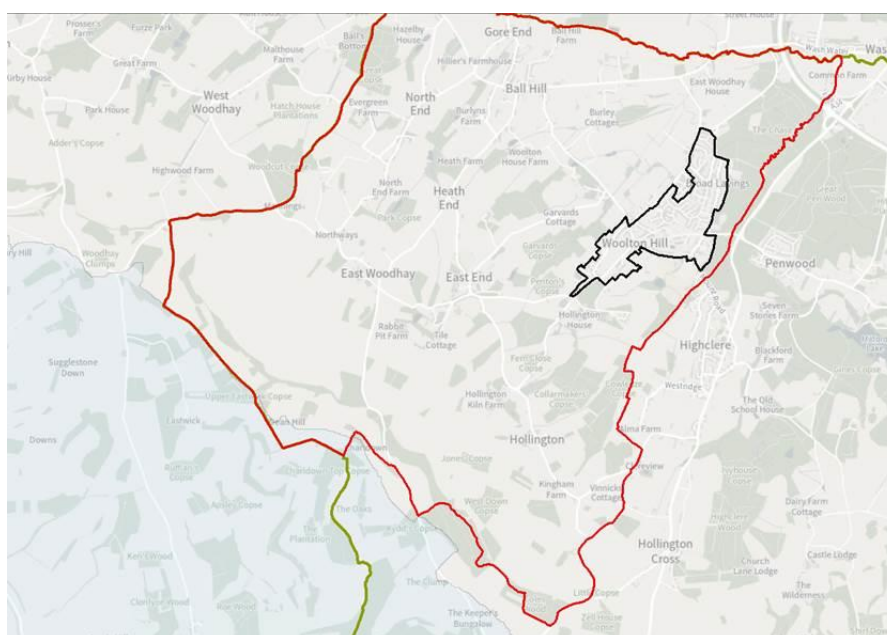


Figure 1: Boundary of Neighbourhood Plan Area (in red) and the catchment of the River Test (in blue). Woolton Hill SPB is edged in black.

8. The Neighbourhood Plan's policies would therefore apply in a small area within the River Test's catchment. However, it is noted that this land is not within Woolton Hill's SPB and not allocated for any new development by the Plan.

SEA Screening

9. It is necessary to consider whether the protected habitats would have any impact upon the SEA Screening previously undertaken.
10. Section 5 of the report provides the SEA Screening Assessment. Table 5.1 provides an assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment. This has been updated and set out in full below (new text underlined):

Table 1: Assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	The Neighbourhood Plan will set a framework for various types of projects and activities, and in so doing will influence the size, location and operating conditions of the development in question. The policies in the Plan will also set criteria which will be applied to planning applications.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	Though unlikely, the Plan could inform supplementary planning documents (such as design guidance), development briefs or site specific guidance.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	The Plan will have regard to the objective of achieving sustainable development in the local area. It will be in conformity with the strategic policies in the Adopted Local Plan 2011-2029.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	The Plan will seek to address environmental, economic and social issues in the neighbourhood area.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The Plan is relevant to various aspects of Community legislation, such as environmental protection and conservation of biodiversity.
Characteristics of the effects likely having regard, in particular, to:	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The Plan will set the local vision, objectives and policies to guide new development in neighbourhood area. It is likely to result in long-term effects associated with changes to land use and physical development of land.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	There are likely to be some fairly limited local cumulative effects arising from and between the different proposals and policies in the Plan, and those in the adopted Local Plan.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	There will be no transboundary effects (in relation to other EU member states).
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);	There are unlikely to be any significant risks to human health, though there is a limited risk of harm to the environment during construction works.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The magnitude of the effects will be regulated by the relatively small number of units likely to be supported by the Plan, meaning the effects are likely to be largely

	localised (i.e. within the neighbourhood area). However, there could be limited effects over a moderately larger area in relation to issues such as landscape impact and highways.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to – . (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; . (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or . (iii) intensive land-use; and	There are various parts of the Neighbourhood Area which are both highly valued and vulnerable, namely the Conservation Areas. There are also Listed Buildings which could be affected (in terms of setting).
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	<p>The majority of the neighbourhood area is within an AONB, however the Plan is not allocating sites, or proposing significant new development that could affect the importance of that landscape or its setting.</p> <p><u>A small part of the borough is within the catchment of the River Test which ultimately discharges into the Solent. Within this area, Natural England has advised that the Council should not grant planning permission for new residential development or overnight accommodation unless it can be shown to be nutrient neutral. However, it is noted that the Plan is not proposing any new development within the small area of the borough within the River Test catchment.</u></p>

11. As set out above only a small rural part of the parish is within the catchment of the River Test. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any development sites in this area. Instead, it directs development to within the Settlement Policy Boundary of Woolton Hill and seeks to restrict development in the countryside. The area of land is also within the AONB, where policies local and national policies impose greater control over new development.
12. Furthermore, as a result of advice from Natural England, new development would not be permitted in this area unless it can be shown to be nutrient neutral. This is confirmed by the LPA's position statement [here](#). There would be scope for this requirement to be set out in the Neighbourhood Plan, as suggested by the LPA's response to the Reg 16 consultation.
13. In relation to the additional consideration of nutrient neutrality, both individually and cumulatively, significant effects on the environment are not likely.

14. It is not considered that any of the other assessments/conclusions in the 2018 screening opinion have changed.

HRA Screening

15. The purpose of the HRA screening is to establish whether the Neighbourhood Plan will have a significant effect on any European site. Only if there may be such an effect will it be necessary to undertake an appropriate assessment, in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
16. In undertaking the screening to establish whether there will be a significant effect, the 'precautionary principle' will need to be followed. The requirement to adhere to the precautionary approach is established by case law and clarified by European Union and domestic government guidance. The use of the precautionary principle requires that when considering the likelihood of a possible effect on a European site it will be assumed that such impacts will occur if there is insufficient evidence to the contrary.
17. In carrying out the screening assessment, the borough council has addressed the various requirements set out in the European Commission guidance⁸. The guidance sets out various steps which need to be followed:
- i) Description of project or plan
 - ii) Characteristics of the European site
 - iii) Assessment of significance
18. The description of the plan (Stage i) is set out in paras 6-8 above, and the characteristics of the additional European sites that need to be considered (Stage ii) are set out in Appendix 1.
19. The draft plan is not proposing to allocate any development sites within the affected area, and the plan includes policies to restrict new residential development in the countryside and protect the natural environment.
20. Furthermore, as a result of advice from Natural England, new development would not be permitted in this area unless it can be shown to be nutrient neutral, and in accordance with policy EM4 of the Adopted Local Plan which protects European designated sites. This is confirmed by the LPA's position statement [here](#). There would be scope for this requirement to be set out in the Neighbourhood Plan, as suggested by the LPA's response to the recent Reg 16 consultation.
21. Therefore, it is considered that there are not likely to be significant effects on any European sites flowing from the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan. It is also not considered that any of the other assessments/conclusions in the

8

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_assess_en.pdf Pages 18 - 23

2018 screening opinion have changed. Accordingly, an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Conclusion

22. This report provides an addendum to the council's 2018 screening opinion as to whether the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to the requirement for the submission of an Environmental Report as required by the EAPP Regulations 2004 and/or Appropriate Assessment as required by the Habitats Regulations 2017.
23. The assessment for both of these requirements has been undertaken on the basis of proposals and policies in the Submission Neighbourhood Plan (and as summarised in this report) and within the strategic framework established by the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan 2011-2029, taking into account the conclusions in the September 2018 screening opinion.
24. The Local Authority's conclusion is that based on the above assessments, and taking into account the views of the consultation bodies (as set out in Appendix 2), a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required and the plan would not be subject to Habitat Regulations Assessment.

Appendix 1: Solent European Sites

The Solent European sites of greatest relevance to increased nutrient inputs from residential development in Basingstoke & Deane are:

- Solent & Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site;
- Solent Maritime SAC;
- Solent & Dorset Coast SPA; and
- Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons Special Area of Conservation

Solent and Southampton Water SPA & Ramsar

Introduction

The Solent and Southampton Water are located on the south English coast. The area covered extends from Hurst Spit to Hill Head along the south coast of Hampshire and from Yarmouth to Whitecliff Bay along the north coast of the Isle of Wight. The site comprises a series of estuaries and harbours with extensive mud-flats and saltmarshes together with adjacent coastal habitats including saline lagoons, shingle beaches, reedbeds, damp woodland and grazing marsh. The mud-flats support beds of *Enteromorpha* spp. and *Zostera* spp. and have a rich invertebrate fauna that forms the food resource for the estuarine birds. In summer, the site is of importance for breeding seabirds, including gulls and four species of terns. In winter, the SPA holds a large and diverse assemblage of waterbirds, including geese, ducks and waders. Dark-bellied brent goose *Branta b. bernicla* also feed in surrounding areas of agricultural land outside the SPA.

Conservation Objectives⁹

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Qualifying Features¹⁰

The following features are reasons for designation as an SPA:

This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive:

During the breeding season;

- Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*, 267 pairs representing at least 2.2% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)

⁹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6567218288525312>

¹⁰ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=2037>

- Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*, 49 pairs representing at least 2.0% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)
- Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*, 2 pairs representing at least 20.0% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1994-1998)
- Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*, 2 pairs representing at least 3.3% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)
- Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*, 231 pairs representing at least 1.7% of the breeding population in Great Britain (5 year peak mean, 1993-1997)

This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following migratory species:

Over winter;

- Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*, 1,125 individuals representing at least 1.6% of the wintering Iceland - breeding population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)
- Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*, 7,506 individuals representing at least 2.5% of the wintering Western Siberia/Western Europe population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)
- Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, 552 individuals representing at least 1.1% of the wintering Europe/Northern Africa - wintering population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)
- Teal *Anas crecca*, 4,400 individuals representing at least 1.1% of the wintering Northwestern Europe population (5 year peak mean, 1992/3-1996/7)

Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance.

The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl.

Over winter, the area regularly supports 53,948 individual waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1991/2 - 1995/6) including: Gadwall *Anas strepera*, Teal *Anas crecca*, Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa islandica*, Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*, Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*, Wigeon *Anas penelope*, Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Pintail *Anas acuta*, Shoveler *Anas clypeata*, Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*, Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*, Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Dunlin *Calidris alpina alpina*, Curlew *Numenius arquata*, Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*.

The following features are reasons for designation as a Ramsar:

Ramsar Criterion 1

The site is one of the few major sheltered channels between a substantial island and mainland in European waters, exhibiting an unusual al strong double tidal flow and has long periods of slack water at high and low tide. It includes many wetland habitats characteristic of the biogeographic region: saline lagoons, saltmarshes, estuaries, intertidal flats, shallow coastal waters, grazing marshes, reedbeds, coastal woodland and rocky boulder reefs.

Ramsar Criterion 2

The site supports an important assemblage of rare plants and invertebrates. At least 33 British Red Data Book invertebrates and at least eight British Red Data Book plants are represented on site.

Ramsar Criterion 5

Assemblages of international importance:

Species with peak counts in winter: 51,343 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)

Ramsar Criterion 6

Species/populations occurring at levels of international importance. Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:

- Ringed plover, *Charadrius hiaticula*, Europe/Northwest Africa 397 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (5 year peak mean 1998/9- 2002/3)

Species with peak counts in winter:

- Dark-bellied Brent goose, *Branta bernicla bernicla*, 6456 individuals, representing an average of 3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
- Eurasian teal, *Anas crecca*, NW Europe 5514 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
- Black-tailed godwit, *Limosa limosa islandica*, Iceland/W Europe 1240 individuals, representing an average of 3.5% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)

Environmental Vulnerabilities

- Public access/disturbance
- Coastal squeeze
- Fisheries: commercial marine and estuarine
- Water pollution
- Changes in species distributions
- Climate change
- Change to site conditions
- Invasive species
- Biological resource use
- Change in land management
- Inappropriate pest control
- Air pollution
- Direct impact from third party

Solent Maritime SAC

Introduction

The Solent Maritime SAC encompasses a major estuarine system on the south coast of England with four coastal plain estuaries (Yar, Medina, King's Quay Shore, Hamble) and four bar-built estuaries (Newtown Harbour, Beaulieu, Langstone Harbour, Chichester Harbour). The site is the only one in the series to contain more than one physiographic sub-type of estuary and is the only cluster site. The Solent and its inlets are unique in Britain and Europe for their hydrographic regime of four tides each day, and for the complexity of the marine and estuarine habitats present within the area. Sediment habitats within the estuaries include extensive estuarine flats, often with intertidal areas supporting eelgrass *Zostera* spp. and green algae, sand and shingle spits, and natural shoreline transitions. The mudflats range from low and variable salinity in the upper reaches of the estuaries to very sheltered almost fully marine muds

in Chichester and Langstone Harbours. Unusual features include the presence of very rare sponges in the Yar estuary and a sandy 'reef' of the polychaete *Sabellaria spinulosa* on the steep eastern side of the entrance to Chichester Harbour.

Conservation Objectives¹¹

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species;
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats;
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely;
- The populations of qualifying species, and;
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Qualifying Features¹²

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Estuaries
- Cord-grass swards
- Atlantic salt meadows

Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site:

- Subtidal sandbanks
- Intertidal mudflats and sandflats
- Coastal lagoons (*Priority Feature)
- Annual vegetation of drift lines
- Coastal shingle vegetation outside of the reach of waves
- Glasswort and other annuals colonising mud and sand
- Shifting dunes with marram

Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection

- Desmoulin's whorl snail.

Environmental Vulnerabilities¹³

The threats and pressures likely to affect the SPA, SAC and Ramsar are listed below:

- Public access/disturbance
- Coastal squeeze
- Fisheries: commercial marine and estuarine
- Water pollution
- Change in site conditions
- Invasive species

¹¹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5762436174970880>

¹² <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0030059>

¹³ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4692013588938752>

- Direct land-take from development
- Change in land management
- Air pollution
- Hydrological changes
- Direct impact from third party
- Extraction: non-living resources

Solent and Dorset Coast SPA

Introduction

The Solent and Dorset Coast SPA was proposed to protect important marine foraging areas for three species of tern (common tern, sandwich tern, little tern). The site is located on the south coast of England in the British Channel, extending from the Isle of Purbeck in the west to Bognor Regis in the east.

The main rationale underpinning the potential designation is that the four breeding tern species have recorded mean foraging ranges between 4.5km and 12.2km from their nesting sites, with maximum distances of 15.2km and 49km respectively. Given that the ranges identified for little terns (which underpin many of the SPA site boundaries on the south coast of England) are unlikely to be representative for the larger tern species, boat-tracking studies of individual foraging birds were undertaken. The results fed into habitat usage models for each tern species, accounting for the maximum identified foraging range around tern colonies.

Since its identification as a pSPA, Natural England has confirmed the recommendation of the Solent and Dorset Coast pSPA to be classified on the basis of the available scientific evidence. The Solent and Dorset Coast SPA was formally designated on the 16th January 2020.

Qualifying Features¹⁴

Species listed under Annex I of the Birds Directive:

- Sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis*; 441 pairs representing 4.01% of the GB breeding population (count between 2008 – 2014)
- Common tern *Sterna hirundo*; 492 pairs representing 4.77% of the GB breeding population (count between 2009 – 2014)
- Little tern *Sternula albifrons*; 63 pairs representing 3.31% of the GB breeding population (count between 2009 – 2014)

Conservation Objectives¹⁵

'Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- *The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features*
- *The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features*
- *The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely*
- *The population of each of the qualifying features, and,*
- *The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.'*

Environmental Vulnerabilities¹⁶

¹⁴ <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0030138>

¹⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5294923917033472>

¹⁶ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5623422855938048>

Natural England is yet to publish a Site Improvement Plan for the Solent and Dorset Coast. However, the threats and pressures to site integrity are likely to be similar than for other European sites designated for terns. Potential issues include:

- Public access / disturbance
- Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine
- Water pollution
- Changes in species distributions
- Climate change
- Changes to site conditions
- Biological resource use
- Air pollution: Risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition
- Hydrological changes
- Extraction: Non-living resources.

Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons Special Area of Conservation

The Solent encompasses a series of coastal lagoons, including percolation, isolated and sluiced lagoons. The site includes a number of lagoons in the marshes in the Keyhaven – Pennington area, at Farlington Marshes in Langstone Harbour, behind the sea-wall at Bembridge Harbour and at Gilkicker, near Gosport.

The water quality target for the coastal lagoon features is to maintain nutrient levels at which biological indicators of eutrophication (opportunistic macroalgal and phytoplankton blooms) do not affect the integrity of the site and features, avoiding deterioration from existing levels. Surveys in 2013, noted several lagoons had high pH levels likely due to photosynthetic activity, however there were no records of opportunistic macroalgae or phytoplankton blooms and most lagoons (except for Butts Lagoon and Shut Lake) continue to support good lagoonal communities. The sediment in Butts Lagoon has remained anoxic in surveys in 2013, although this represents similar conditions to that present in baseline surveys. Therefore, available evidence does not indicate that eutrophication is affecting site integrity at any of the lagoons within the SAC, except for Butts Lagoon¹⁷.

Qualifying Features¹⁸

Priority Habitats listed under Annex I of the Habitats Directive:

- Coastal lagoons

Conservation Objectives¹⁹

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- *The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats –*
- *The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats, and*
- *The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely*

¹⁷ [Solent Nutrients - V5 June 2020 \(basingstoke.gov.uk\)](https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/solent-nutrients-v5-june-2020)

¹⁸ [European Site Conservation Objectives for Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC - UK0017073 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-solent-isle-of-wight-lagoons-sac-uk0017073)

¹⁹ [European Site Conservation Objectives for Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC - UK0017073 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/european-site-conservation-objectives-for-solent-isle-of-wight-lagoons-sac-uk0017073)

Environmental Vulnerabilities²⁰

As set out in the Site improvement Plan, the priorities issues for the site are:

- Hydrological changes
- Inappropriate weed control
- Coastal squeeze
- Invasive species
- Air pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

²⁰ [Site Improvement Plan: Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons - SIP270 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-06/2020-06-01_SIP270_Solent_and_Isle_of_Wight_Lagoons.pdf)

Appendix 2: Responses from consultation bodies



Mr Matt Melville

Direct Dial: 0207 973 3700

Basingstoke Borough Council

Our ref: PL00470377

24 May 2022

Dear Mr Melville

Re: SEA/HRA Screening for East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan (in Basingstoke and Deane Borough)

Thank you for your email of 23 May 2022 notifying Historic England of the proposed addendum relating to the above site. Our specialist staff have considered the information received and we do not wish to offer any comments on this occasion.

Recommendation

This application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your expert conservation advice.

It is not necessary for us to be consulted again on this application. However, if you would like further advice, please contact us to explain your request. We can then let you know if we are able to help further and agree a timetable with you.

Yours sincerely,|

Catharine

Catharine Rowden
Business Officer
catharine.rowden@HistoricEngland.org.uk

Date: 14 June 2022
Our ref: 394128
Your ref: East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan



Mr M Melville
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T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY - matt.melville@basingstoke.gov.uk

Dear Mr Melville

East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan – Review SEA & HRA Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 23 May 2022.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening

It is noted that part of the East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan area lies within the Test catchment, which drains to the Solent. Residential development that drains to the Solent should demonstrate nutrient neutrality and be accompanied by an Appropriate Assessment. This applies to proposals within the Solent catchment area, and in addition to proposals located outside of this catchment where the wastewater would be conveyed to a Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTWs) within the Solent catchment.

The East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any development within the Test catchment area, instead directing development to within the Settlement Policy Boundary of Woolton Hill. It is noted within Basingstoke and Deane Water Cycle Study (May 2022) that wastewater from Woolton Hill is treated at Washwater WwTWs, within the Kennet catchment area, which does not drain into the Solent. Residential development within East Woodhay Neighbourhood Plan therefore does not need to demonstrate nutrient neutrality and on this basis we concur that the no Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) is needed.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team

Environment Agency: No response received.