



**Basingstoke
and Deane**



Bramley Parish Council
Bramley Village Hall
Bramley
Hampshire

16 October 2014

Dear Sir or Madam

Bramley Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion

This letter sets out the borough council's screening opinion concerning the need for SEA and HRA in relation to the Bramley Neighbourhood Plan. This screening opinion has been underpinned by a detailed report and the opinions of the three consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage).

The screening process undertaken concludes that in order to meet the 'basic conditions'¹ for neighbourhood planning **an Environmental Assessment is considered to be required to accompany the Bramley Neighbourhood Plan but it would not need to be subject to HRA.** The consultation bodies have all agreed with the conclusion reached. The reasons for the decision are set out below:

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Whilst the neighbourhood plan does include a policy which would restrict the size of housing sites which may come forward, there is no cap on the total number of houses which could be provided using this policy. Therefore, the cumulative environmental impact of such development could be significant.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the approach to providing new housing is similar to that adopted in relation to the Tattenhall Neighbourhood Plan, where an SEA was required in relation to that plan². This is especially pertinent given that Tattenhall is a

¹ Requirement (f), that the making of the order or neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU Obligations. The basic conditions are set out in [paragraph 8\(2\) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

² Please see examiners report, page 8.

http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your_council/policies_and_performance/council_plans_and_strategies/planning_policy/neighbourhood_planning/tattenhall_and_district_neighb.aspx

smaller settlement and had a lower limit on the size of sites (which was set at 30 units, compared with the 50 proposed in this instance).

Therefore, in light of the assessment set out in the screening report it is considered that an SEA is required in relation to the Bramley Neighbourhood Plan.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

There is one European site within a 10 km buffer zone of the neighbourhood area, namely the Thames Basin Heath SPA. However, the SPA is still over 5 km away from the neighbourhood area. Given the nature of the development which is likely to be facilitated by the neighbourhood plan, which is predominantly housing sites, the size of which is capped at 50 units, it is considered that the impacts of the plan are likely to be fairly localised, and would not impact on the Thames Basin Heath SPA, or any other European site.

The Environment Assessment will need to meet the relevant legal requirements set out in the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#). Further guidance on the requirements for carrying out the Environment Assessment is set out in the [National Planning Practice Guide](#) and [the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive: guidance](#). In addition, please feel free to contact the borough council (planning policy team) if you require any additional advice regarding how to complete the Environmental Assessment.

Yours Sincerely

Andrew Rushmer
Senior Planning Policy Officer