



Basingstoke
and Deane

Neighbourhood Planning Screening Report – Old Basing and Lychpit

**Final version following consideration
by consultation bodies**

Strategic Environmental Impact
Assessment

and

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

March 2017

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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 Old Basing and Lychpit 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 Old Basing and Lychpit Neighbourhood Plan and that it would not need to be subject to HRA. The responses from the three consultation bodies can be found in Appendix 4 of this report.**

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Old Basing and Lychpit 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:

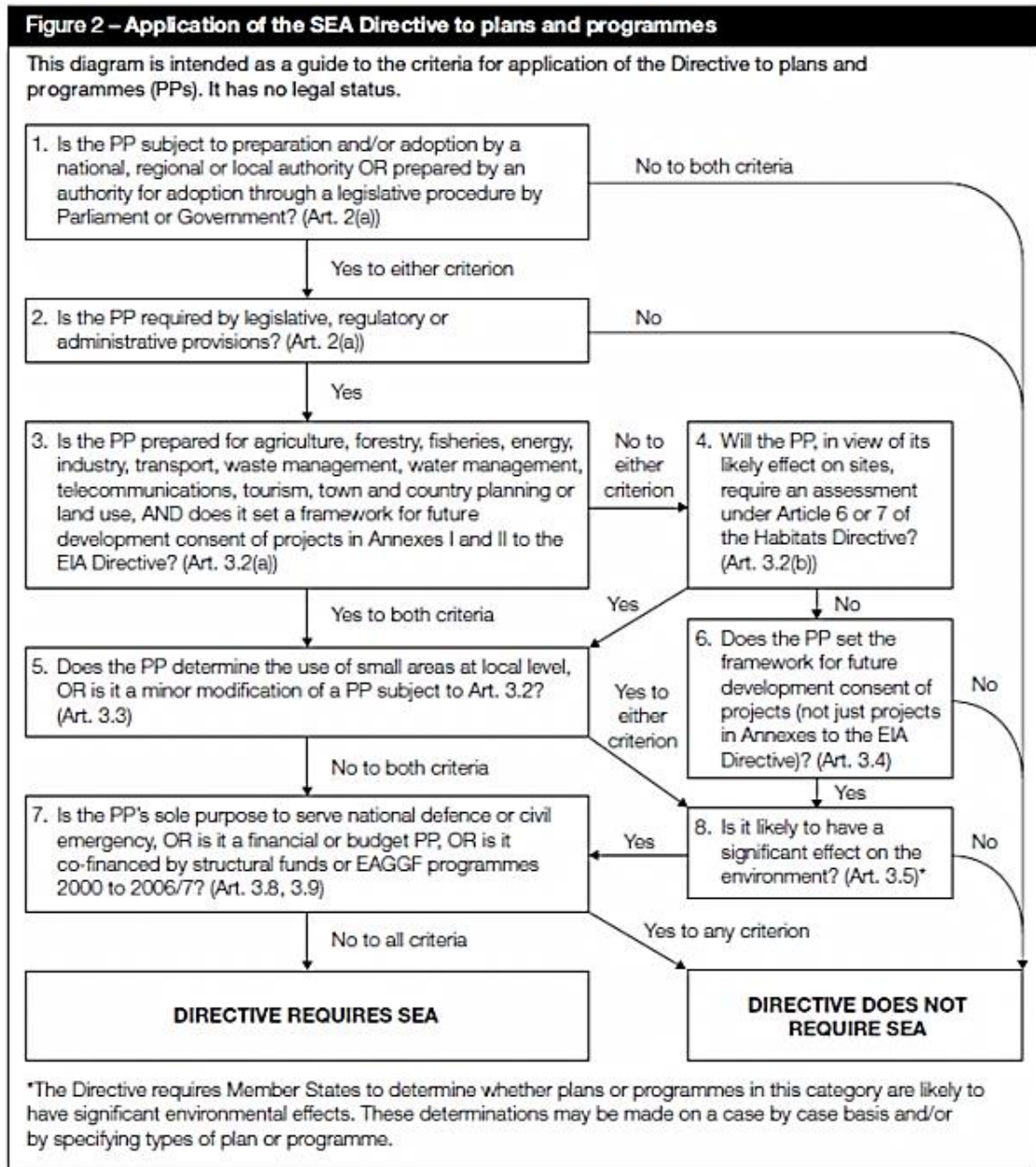
Does a neighbourhood plan require a strategic environmental assessment?

In some limited circumstances, where a [neighbourhood plan](#) could have significant environmental effects, it may fall within the scope of the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#) and so require a strategic environmental assessment. 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 obligations. 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](#).

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

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

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).

Habitats Directive as transposed into English law via The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

- 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.
- 2.6 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 and Addendum supporting the Adopted Local Plan 2011 - 2029). Where relevant the key environmental conditions that support the site are assessed below against the proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Consultation bodies

- 2.7 Once the preliminary assessments of the requirement for both SEA and HRA had been undertaken, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England were consulted on the preliminary conclusions. Appendix 4 of this report incorporates the consultation responses provided by these consultation bodies, which have informed the finalised 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
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

³

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

	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.
	?	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.
	yes	A Neighbourhood Plan can determine the use of small areas at the local level.
	yes	
	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 The designated Neighbourhood Plan area covers the entire parish of Old Basing and Lychpit, and is being prepared by the Parish Council.
- 4.2 The area is principally formed around the village of Old Basing. The village, and the majority of housing, sits to the north of the M3. The railway line that stretches from Basingstoke to Hook runs through the centre of the parish.
- 4.3 In terms of environmental constraints associated with Old Basing and Lychpit, there are a number of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) including Crabtree Plantation and Mill Field, and ancient woodlands scattered throughout the parish. There are also areas within flood zones 2 and 3 principally running along the River Loddon to the west and north of Old Basing, and the River Lyde to the east. In addition, approximately a third of the parish falls within the Loddon Valley. Appendix 1 includes a map showing the main environmental constraints associated with the parish.
- 4.4 The village has a historic core with a number of listed buildings and a Conservation Area. The council has adopted a Conservation Area appraisal for the village of Old Basing as Supplementary Planning Guidance, identifying notable features and key views - <https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/33840/Conservation%20Area%20Appraisal%20for%20Old%20Basing.pdf>
- 4.5 The parish also contains two scheduled monuments, Basing House and Oliver's Battery. There are also a number of Grade I, II and II* Listed Buildings within the parish, particularly in the Conservation Area, such as Basing House, which is Grade II*, and St Mary's Church which is Grade I.
- 4.6 The Adopted Local Plan (ALP) 2011-2029 allocates housing sites that fall within the parish of Old Basing and Lychpit. This includes the site allocation at Swing Swang Lane (policy SS3.1) and part of the site allocation for the East of Basingstoke (policy SS3.9). The Basingstoke Sewage Treatment Works and Chineham Energy Recovery Facility are also within the neighbourhood plan area. In addition, land to the west of Old Basing is designated as a Strategic Gap in the ALP and falls within the parish boundary.

- 4.7 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan have been refined through local consultation. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to achieve the following:
- Small scale, sustainable growth, focusing new housing within the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB), and permitting new housing in the countryside in exceptional circumstances only, in line with the ALP.
 - The provision of a mix of housing types in order to serve a range of people.
 - Minimise the impact of development on the character of the neighbourhood area, including its environment and the Loddon Valley landscape
 - To designate and protect local green spaces.
 - The provision of adequate infrastructure, particularly related to traffic, and existing cycle and pedestrian routes.
- 4.8 In light of the above the following policies are being proposed in the Old Basing and Lychpit Neighbourhood Plan:
- Focusing new housing within the SPB and new housing in exceptional circumstances outside the SPB in line with the ALP.
 - Housing mix requirements.
 - Landscape protection.
 - Protection of Local Green Spaces.
 - Historic environment.
 - Housing design requirements.
 - Protection of existing cycle routes and footpaths.
 - Infrastructure provision.

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 ALP.
(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.
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.
(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.

<p>(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to –</p> <p>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; .</p> <p>(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or .</p> <p>(iii) intensive land-use; and</p>	<p>There are various parts of the Neighbourhood Area which are both highly valued and vulnerable, namely the various SINCs, and the Conservation Area. There are also Listed Buildings which could be affected (in terms of setting).</p>
<p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>No part of the Neighbourhood Plan area is in the AONB, and it is sufficiently far removed that development is unlikely to impact upon the setting of the AONB.</p>

5.4 As a result of the analysis undertaken to assess the effects on the environment resulting from the Old Basing and Lychpit Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that significant effects on the environmental are not likely. The explanation of for this assessment is set out in more detail below.

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.”

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. 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*

5.6 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 specific development sites. Therefore, this suggests that an SEA is less likely to be required. However, there are other environment considerations which have been set out in section 4 of this screening document.

⁴ Paragraph: 047 Reference ID: 11-047-20150209

- 5.7 Another consideration is that whilst the neighbourhood plan does not allocate specific development sites, it does seek to facilitate some new, albeit limited, new housing development, namely focusing residential development in the SPB and limited development outside of the SPB in line with policy SS6 of the ALP. In addition, the exact amount of development this will constitute cannot be precisely quantified at this stage. However, a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) has already been undertaken by the borough council which considers the environmental impacts of the ALP policies.
- 5.8 Given the amount of residential development proposed, it is likely that the environment effects will be localised, only involving limited landscape in respect of views, and highways impacts in relation to additional traffic on roads in the area.
- 5.9 It is also necessary to consider the impact of the neighbourhood plan on the conservation area, the setting of the listed buildings and other heritage assets and the other environmental considerations. In particular, there are Flood Zone 2 and 3 areas running from the south west to the north east of the parish. There are also a number of SINC's and ancient woodlands distributed around the neighbourhood area.
- 5.10 The Neighbourhood Plan area itself does not include any part of the North Wessex Downs AONB, and its closest part is approximately 6 km away. Given these separation distances, it is considered that the plan is not likely to have any impact upon its setting.
- 5.11 In respect of heritage impacts, the Conservation Area cuts into the north western part of the 7km SPA buffer zone and there are a number of Listed Buildings in the neighbourhood plan area, including Basing House, which is Grade II* Listed.
- 5.12 The scale of residential development that is being proposed by the neighbourhood plan is small scale and focused in the SPB which is away from the flood zones and SINC's/ancient woodlands, which will minimise the impacts in relation to flooding, biodiversity and landscape.
- 5.11 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 2010, 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 be assumed that such impacts will occur if there is insufficient evidence to the contrary.

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

- 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
- 6.7 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.
- 6.8 The ALP 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.
- 6.9 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 ALP, 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.

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

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

6.10 There is one European site within a 10km buffer zone of the neighbourhood area, namely the Thames Basin Heath SPA. Accordingly a screening matrix has been completed in relation to the SPA.

Thames Basin Heath SPA

6.11 Only a small area of the north-eastern edge of the parish boundary is within the 7km buffer zone of the SPA (see the constraints maps in appendix 1). The screening matrix below provides further detail in respect of the potential impacts of the neighbourhood plan on the SPA.

Screening Matrix	
Name of European site ⁸ : Thames Basin Heath SPA	
Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plan or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European site.	Small scale residential development within the neighbourhood area, in line with policy SS6 of the ALP, will have a limited impact on the localised environment. In addition, the distance between the village of Old Basing, where development would be primarily be focused, and the SPA, which is over 5km, there will be no direct or significant impact on the European site.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European site by virtue of: size and scale; land-take; distance from the European site or key features; resource requirements (e.g. water abstraction); emissions; excavation requirements; transportation requirements; duration of construction activities.	The small scale residential development covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to result in few environmental impacts in the form of limited atmospheric pollution, as well as landscape and highways impacts. There would also be some limited, localised, environmental impacts flowing from construction processes. However, none of these would be of a scale which could reasonably be considered to impact significantly on the SPA, given the significant separation distance of over 5km.

⁸ Please see Appendix 2 for details of the European site itself

Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: reduction of habitat area; disturbance to key species; habitat or species fragmentation; reduction in species density; changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); climate change.	Given the scale of development proposed by the Neighbourhood Plan, and the separation distance in relation to the SPA, no development in the neighbourhood area is likely to result in the impacts listed opposite.
Describe any likely impacts on the European site as a whole in terms of: interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site; interference with key relationships that define the function of the site.	Given the location of the neighbourhood area and potential development sites in relation to the SPA, there will be no likely impacts on the European site as a whole.
Provide indicator of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of: loss; fragmentation; disruption; disturbance; changes to key elements.	The Plan is likely to predominantly facilitate small scale residential development, in line with policy SS6, of the ALP. Therefore, having regard to the European Commission report concerning the assessment of the effects on Natura 2000 sites ⁹ , it is considered that there is likely to be a negligible impact on the significance of the European site, as there will be no loss, fragmentation or disturbance of habitat areas which form part of the European site (which is located over 5 km from Old Basing and Lychpit parish).
Describe from the above those elements of the plan where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.	Given the potential location of the development and the scale of development proposed in the plan relative to the SPA, it is considered there will be no significant impact on the SPA.
Conclusion	No significant effects on the SPA are considered to be likely.

6.12 Given that the SPA is still over 5km away from the neighbourhood area, and the nature of the development which is likely to be facilitated by the neighbourhood plan, which is predominately small scale residential development, 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 European sites.

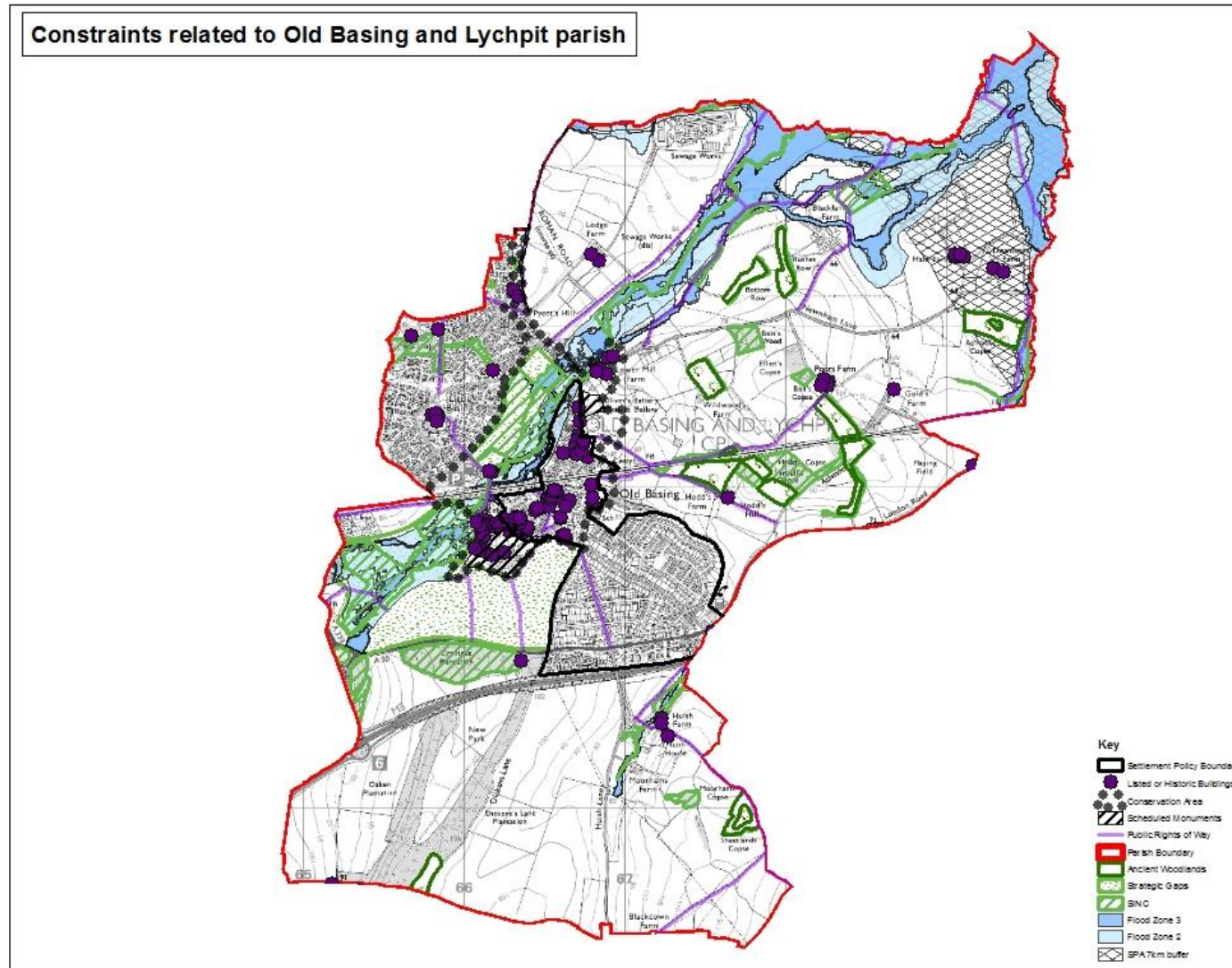
⁹ Page 20, paragraph 3.1.5

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_asses_en.pdf

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This report contains the assessment as to whether the Old Basing and Lychpit 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 2010.
- 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 of the ALP.
- 7.3 **The Local Authority has therefore concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required and the plan would not be subject to Habitat Regulations Assessment.**

Appendix 1 – Environmental Constraints



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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 Cliff 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-Batrachion* 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-Batrachion* 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

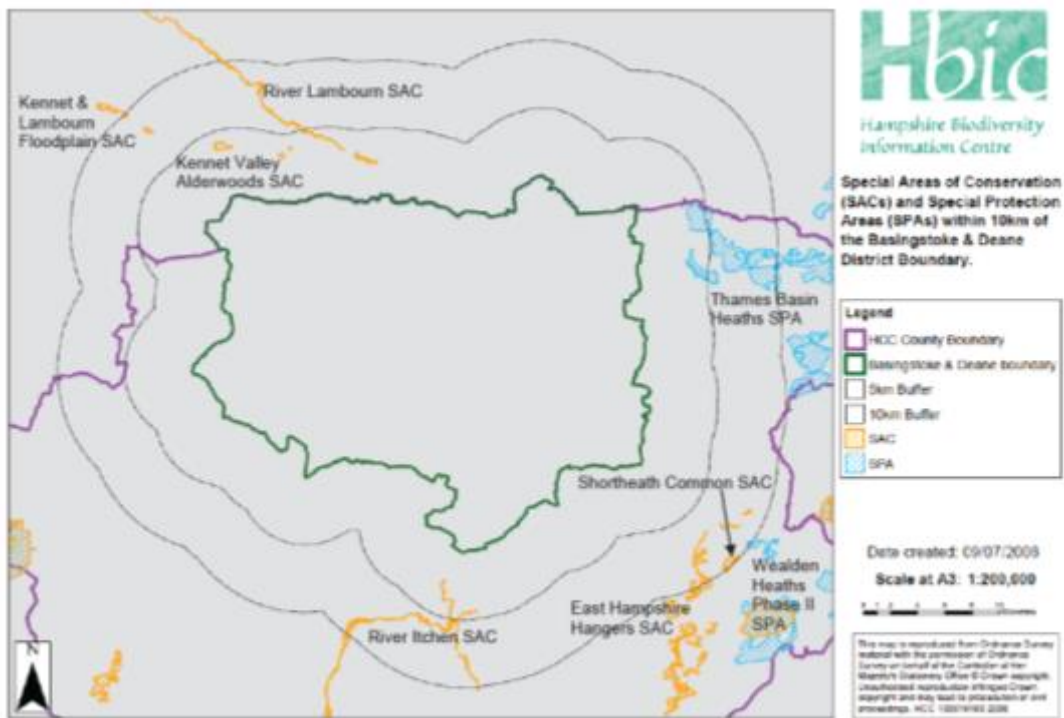
The Shortheath Common SAC qualifies as a SAC for containing the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

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

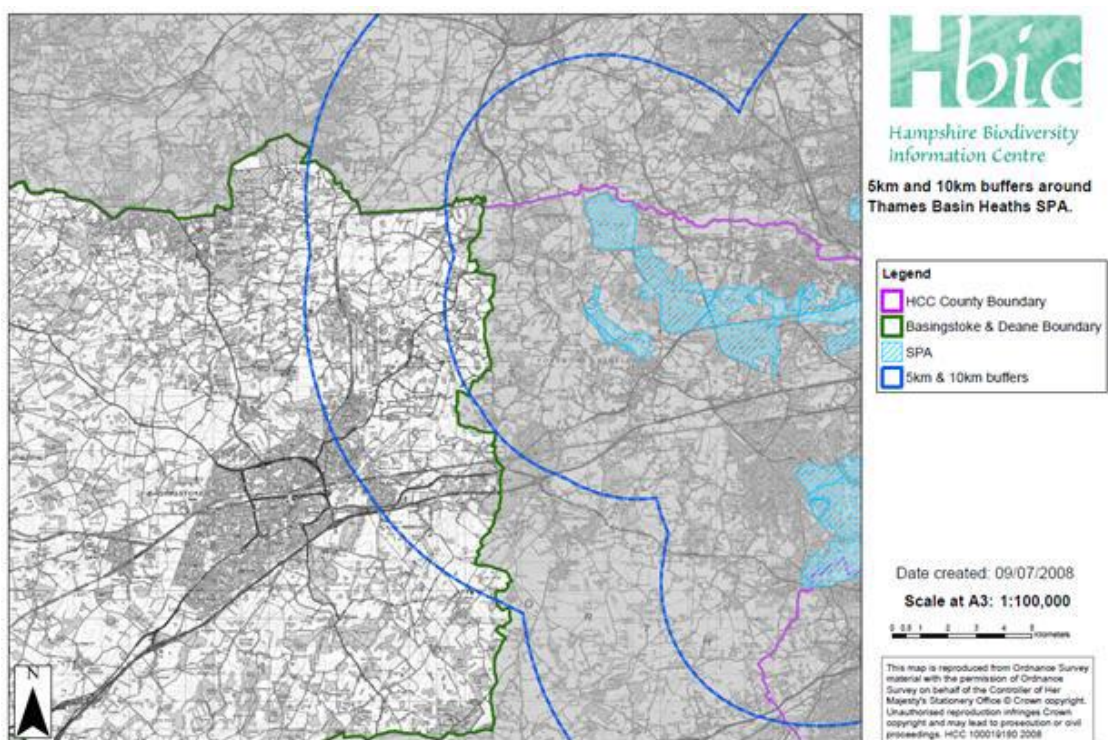
Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

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.

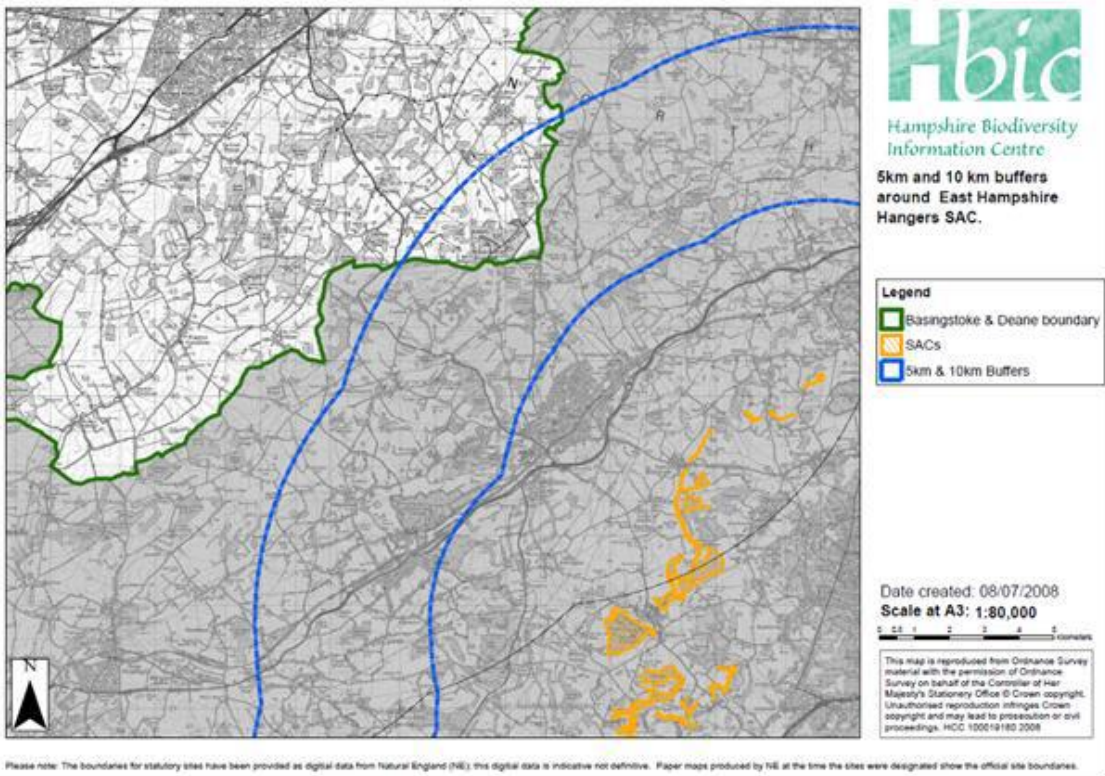
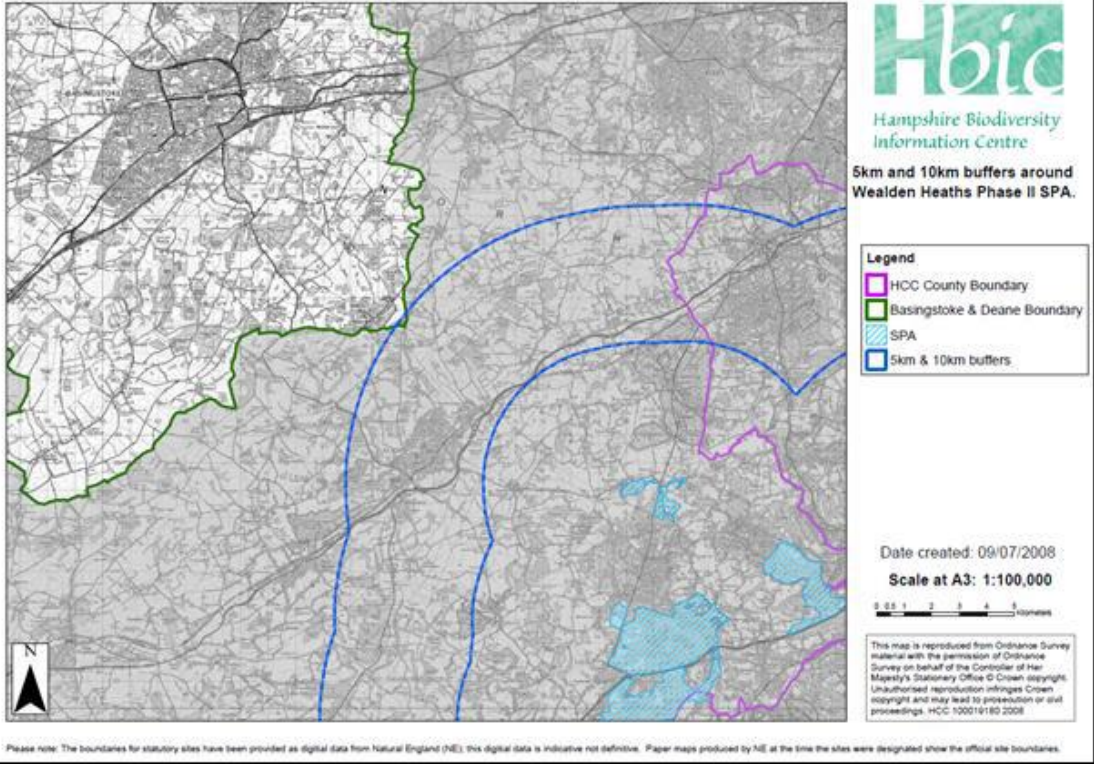
Appendix 3 - Maps of European sites within 10km of Basingstoke and Deane Borough

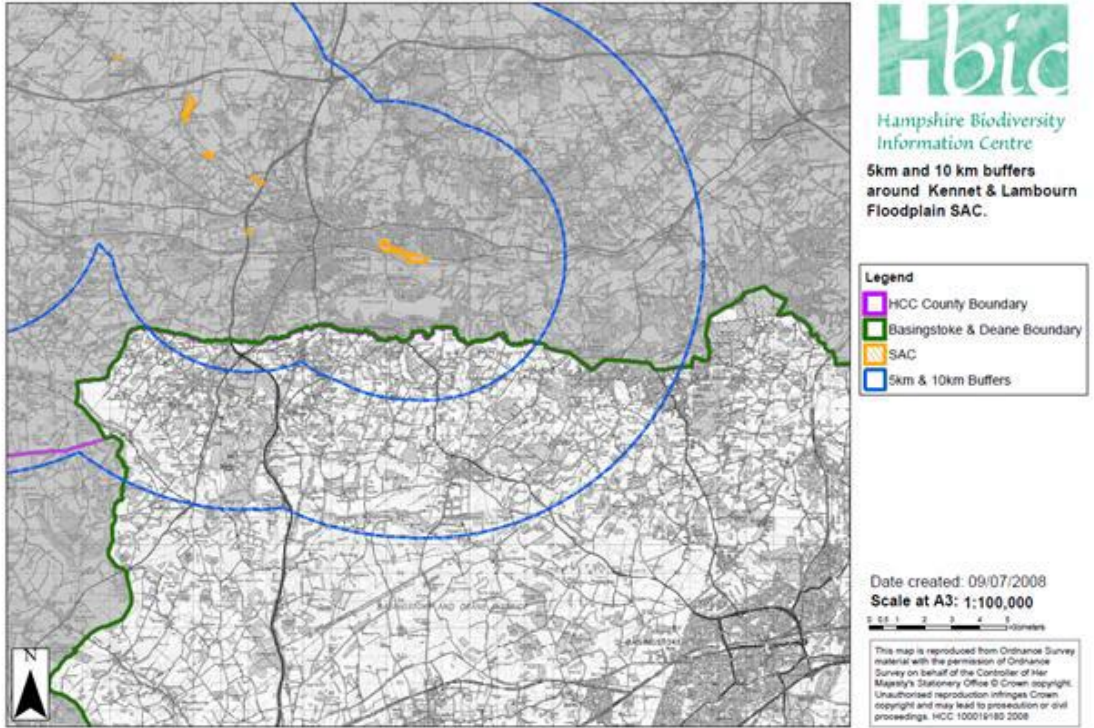


Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.

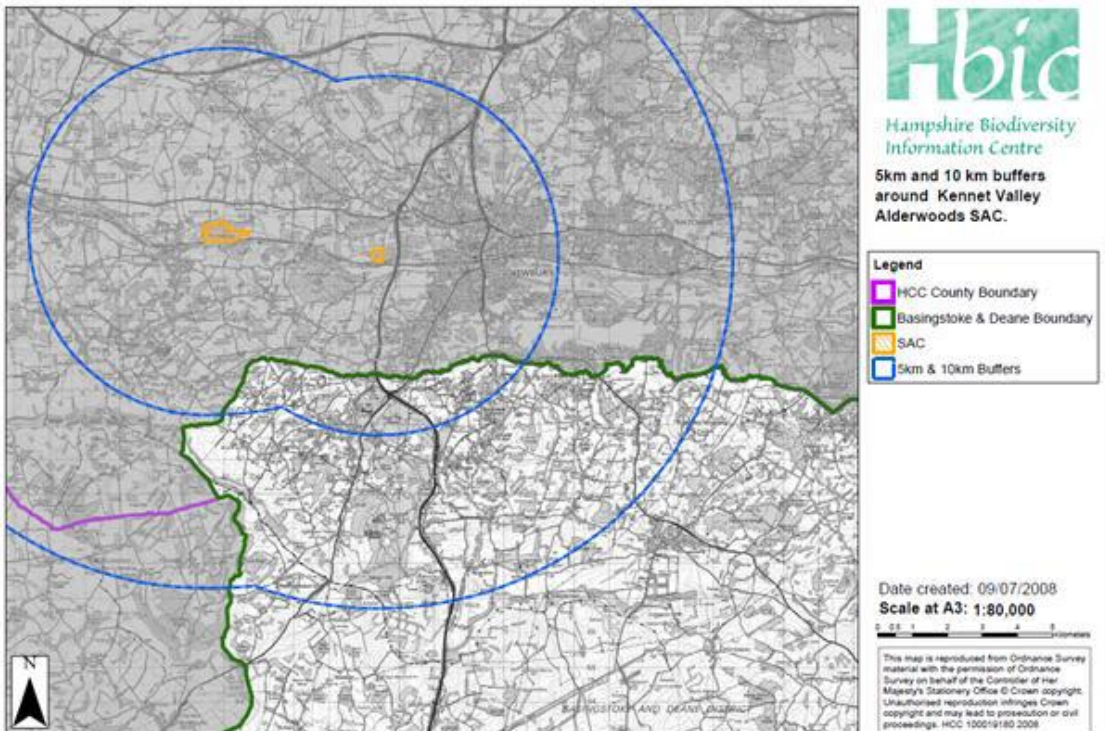


Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.

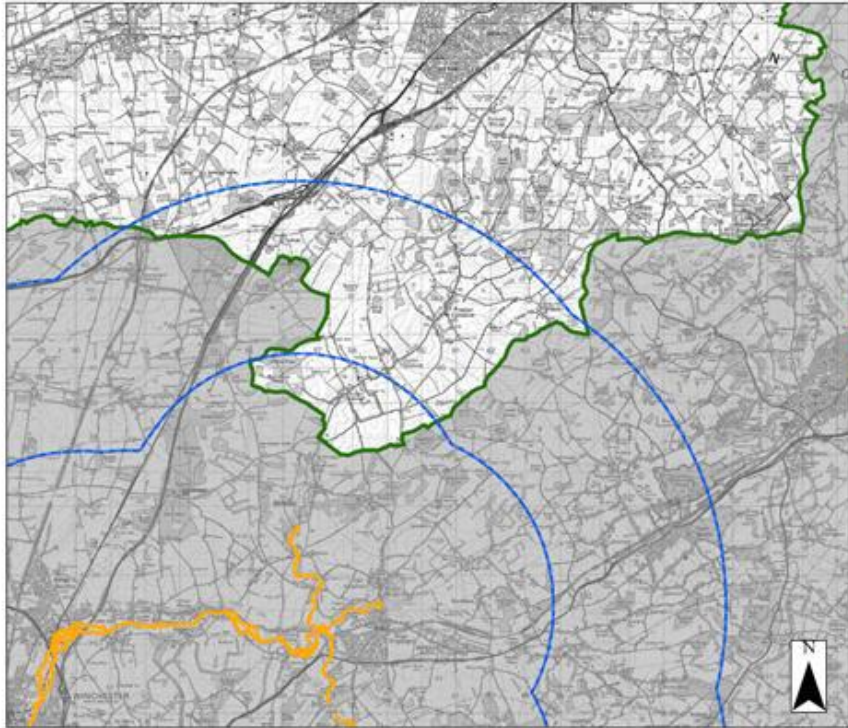




Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.



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Hbic
 Hampshire Biodiversity
 Information Centre

**5km and 10 km buffers
 around River Itchen
 SAC.**

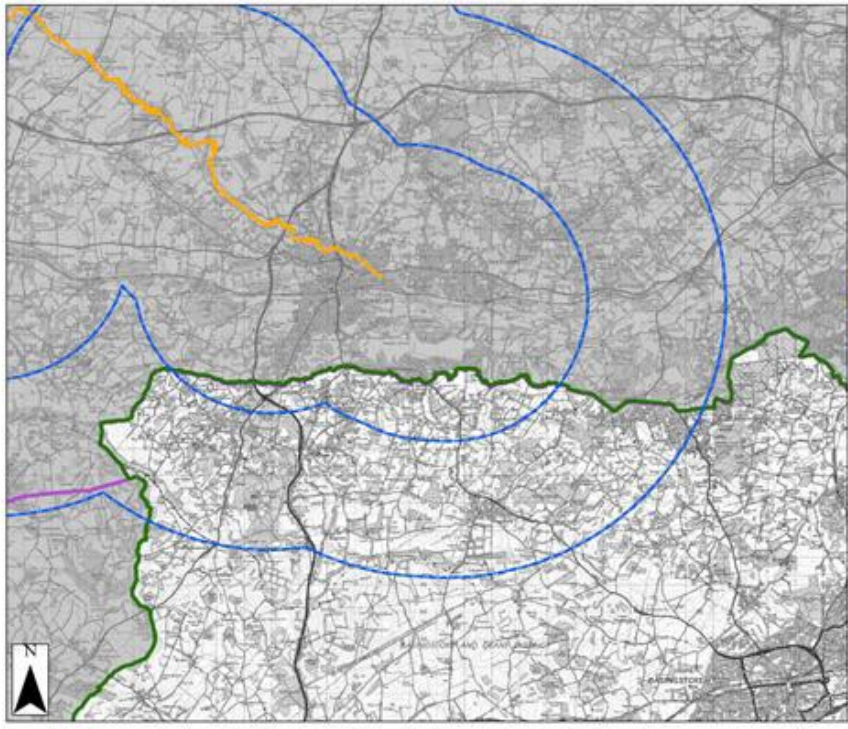
- Legend**
- Basingstoke & Deane Boundary
 - SAC
 - 5km & 10km Buffers

Date created: 09/07/2008
 Scale at A3: 1:80,000



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Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.



Hbic
 Hampshire Biodiversity
 Information Centre

**5km and 10 km buffers
 around River Lambourn
 SAC.**

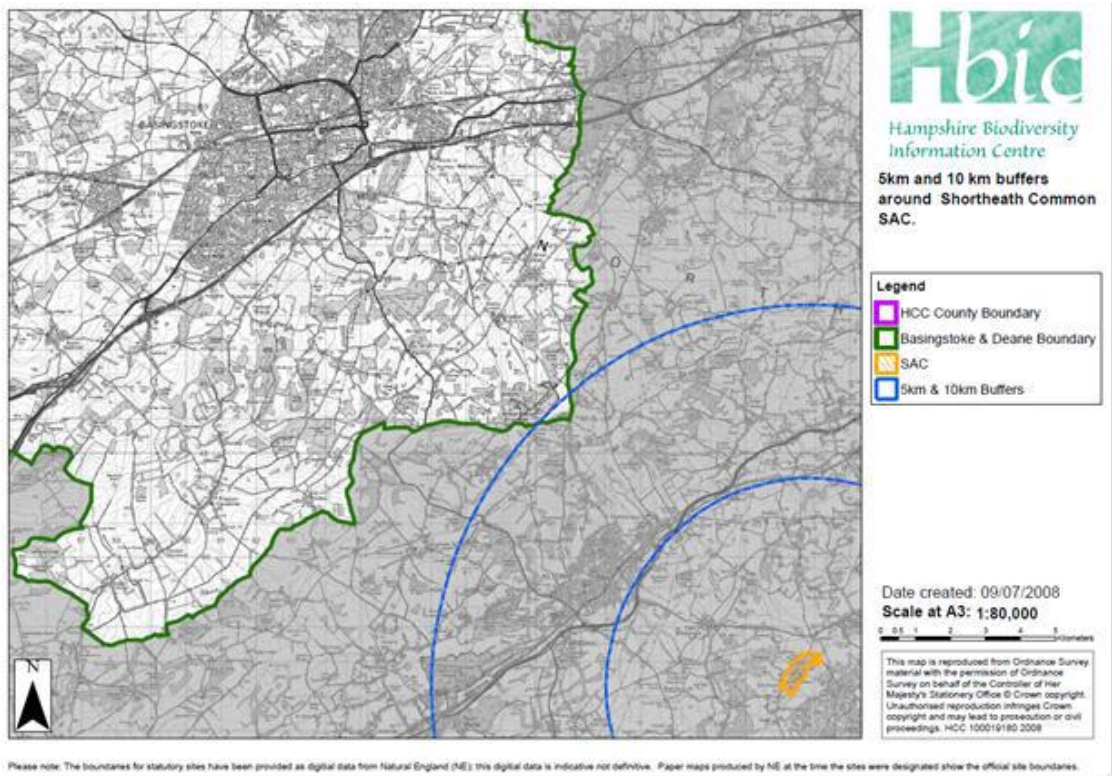
- Legend**
- HCC County Boundary
 - Basingstoke & Deane boundary
 - SAC
 - 5km & 10km Buffers

Date created: 09/07/2008
 Scale at A3: 1:100,000



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Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.



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

Appendix 4 – Responses from Consultation bodies

Mr Edward Rehill
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council
Planning Policy
Civic Offices London Road
Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG21 4AH

Our ref: WA/2011/109908/OR-
28/IS1-L01
Your ref:
Date: 22 February 2017

Dear Mr Rehill

SEA screening opinion – Old Basing and Lychpit Neighbourhood Plan

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the SEA screening opinion for the Old Basing and Lychpit Neighbourhood Plan. We apologise for the delay of our response. We are a statutory consultee in the SEA process and aim to reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment. We have reviewed the draft plan, and have identified the following environmental constraints that relate to the Neighbourhood Plan area:

Flood risk

As you have stated in paragraph 4.3 of your screening report, there are areas of flood zone 2 and 3 within the neighbourhood plan area. However, we note that the approved local plan site allocation site SS3.1, Swing Swang Lane, is outside of flood zones, and that policy SS3.9, East of Basingstoke, includes a requirement for development to avoid the areas of the site within flood zones 2 and 3. Furthermore we note that the neighbourhood plan does not propose to allocate any specific development sites.

Main rivers

The Rivers Loddon and Lyde run through the neighbourhood plan area as described in paragraph 4.3 of your screening report. These watercourses are currently failing to reach good ecological potential under the Water Framework Directive, and are both currently classified as poor. Developments within or adjacent to these watercourses should not cause further deterioration and should seek to improve the water quality based on the recommendations of the Thames River Basin Management Plan.

For your information we have published joint advice with Natural England, English Heritage and the Forestry Commission on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans.

Cont/d..



This is available at:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf

Your Lead local flood authority's Surface Water Management Plan will indicate if there are any critical drainage areas from local sources of flood risk (e.g. surface water, groundwater and sewerage) which coincide with the neighbourhood plan area.

In conclusion, whilst we are aware of the environmental constraints mentioned above which affect the plan area, we agree with your assessment that the neighbourhood plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

Yours sincerely

Judith Johnson
Sustainable Places team

Direct dial 020 3025 9495

e-mail planning-wallingford@environment-agency.gov.uk



Historic England

Ms Emma Betteridge
Planning Officer
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Civic Offices
London Road
Basingstoke
Hampshire, RG21 4AH.

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

6th February 2017

Dear Ms Betteridge,

Old Basing and Lychpit Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion

Thank you for your e-mail of 4th January seeking the views of Historic England on your Council's Old Basing and Lychpit Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion.

As noted in the Council's Draft Screening Report, "*The village has a historic core with a number of listed buildings and a Conservation Area..... The parish also contains two scheduled monuments, Basing House and Oliver's Battery. There are also a number of Grade I, II and II* Listed Buildings within the parish, particularly in the Conservation Area, such as Basing House, which is Grade II*, and St Mary's Church which is Grade I.*" In fact, the National Heritage List for England has 90 listing entries, three scheduled monuments (including Pyott's Hill entrenchment) and two registered historic parks and gardens for the parish. The great majority of the listed buildings lie within the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB).

The Council's Draft Screening Report also notes that "*whilst the neighbourhood plan does not allocate specific development sites, it does seek to facilitate some new, albeit limited, new housing development, namely focusing residential development in the SPB and limited development outside of the SPB in line with policy SS6 of the ALP*".

We do not know at this stage whether or not the policy(ies) of the Plan allowing this new housing development will contain criteria requiring the protection/ conservation of the historic environment and heritage assets therein, or whether there will be a specific policy in the Plan for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. There would appear, therefore, to be the potential for significant effects on the historic environment of the Plan area arising from what little we know of the Neighbourhood Plan at this time.



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.



We note the Council's reference to the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) of the Local Plan. However, the Assessment concludes, in respect of Policy SS1 and Objective 15, that "*There is the potential for new development to negatively impact on the local built environment, especially where there are Conservation Areas and listed buildings, but this is uncertain at this stage – it will depend on the sites and nature of development*". The SA/SEA of the Local Plan does not, therefore, rule out potential significant effects on the historic environment arising from Policy SS1, which we understand is to be basis for the Neighbourhood Plan's approach to allowing limited development within the SPB.

Although it is understood that the Neighbourhood Plan will not allocate sites, a policy in the Plan allowing development within the SPB might provide greater certainty as to where such development may be allowed, which would allow a more refined assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the development allowed by the policy, including potential mitigation. The National Planning Policy Guidance notes that "*A strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:* • *the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan*".

We recognise that the Adopted Local Plan 2011-2029 includes Policies EM10 and EM11, both of which could be considered as strategic policies that would not be superseded by the Neighbourhood Plan and which would therefore provide protection for heritage assets in the Plan area. Nevertheless, because of the uncertainty over the policy wording in the Neighbourhood Plan, we would prefer to proceed on the basis that a SEA of the Plan should be required, proportionate to the potential impacts. We would be happy to review that opinion once we have sight of the Plan.

As you and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are aware, 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). The responsibility for ensuring that the Plan meets the basic conditions lies with the qualifying body and yourselves as the authority that will make the Plan if it passes the referendum.

If the Council wishes to proceed at this stage on the basis that a SEA of the Plan is not required, we would not object, but only on the clear understanding that once we have seen the draft policies of the Plan we may formally state our opinion that a SEA is required (particularly if the Plan does, contrary to your expectation, allocate sites).

If the Plan was to include a policy to conserve and enhance local heritage assets (as we would encourage, in line with the advice in the National Planning Practice Guidance that it would be helpful for the Plan to include enough information "*about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the local plan into action at a neighbourhood scale*" and "*about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions*") or the policy allowing development within the settlement included a criterion allowing



development only where there would be no adverse impact on the significance of heritage assets, we would be likely to be satisfied that the Plan would be unlikely to lead to any significant effects on the historic environment such that SEA would not be required.

Even if a formal SEA is not currently believed to be necessary, we would nevertheless suggest that the Plan is subject to a form of sustainability appraisal to assess and monitor the Plan's policies and proposals against a set of agreed objectives.

Thank you again for seeking the views of Historic England on this Screening Opinion. If you have any queries, please contact me.

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



Date: 21 February 2017
Our ref: 205172
Your ref: No reference given



Edward Rehill
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Customer Services
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Edward

Old Basing and Lychpit Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 04 January 2017 which was received by Natural England on 04 January 2017.

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.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

Natural England's opinion is that the Old Basing and Lychpit Neighbourhood plan does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Natural England does not have any further specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan.

However, we refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Felicity Bingham on 02082 256387. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely
Felicity Bingham
Sustainable Development Advisor
Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Team
felicity.bingham@naturalengland.org.uk

Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

Natural environment information sources

The [Magic](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/)¹ website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available [here](#)².

Priority habitats are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)³. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here](#)⁴.

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/)⁵ website and also from the [LandIS website](http://www.landis.org.uk/)⁶, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

Natural environment issues to consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)⁷ sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/)⁸ sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

Landscape

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland

¹ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

² <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

³ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

⁵ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

⁶ <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁸ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here](#)⁹), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)¹⁰. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here](#)¹¹) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice [here](#)¹² to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 112. For more information, see our publication [Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land](#)¹³.

Improving your natural environment

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development. Examples might include:

- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.

⁹<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹⁰<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

¹¹<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹²<https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

¹³<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>

- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance on this](#) ¹⁴).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

¹⁴ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>



Historic England

Our ref: HD/P5229/
Your ref:

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Fax

2nd October 2017

Dear Ms Hopkinson,

Old Basing and Lychpit Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion

Thank you for your e-mail of 11th September advising Historic England of the proposed addition to the Old Basing and Lychpit Neighbourhood Plan of a new policy on the historic environment. You enquire whether that addition would overcome our concerns about the potential effects of the policies and proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan on the historic environment such that the Plan need not be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment. I apologise for the delay in responding but have been away on leave and otherwise out of the office.

In my letter of 6th February 2017 in response to the draft Screening Opinion I noted that

"We do not know at this stage whether or not the policy(ies) of the Plan allowing this new housing development will contain criteria requiring the protection/ conservation of the historic environment and heritage assets therein, or whether there will be a specific policy in the Plan for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. There would appear, therefore, to be the potential for significant effects on the historic environment of the Plan area arising from what little we know of the Neighbourhood Plan at this time."

However, I also said:

"If the Plan was to include a policy to conserve and enhance local heritage assets (as we would encourage, in line with the advice in the National Planning Practice Guidance that it would be helpful for the Plan to include enough information "about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the local plan into action at a neighbourhood scale" and "about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions").....we would be likely to be satisfied that the Plan would be unlikely to lead to any significant effects on the historic environment such that SEA would not be required."

We therefore welcome the proposed addition of a policy for the historic environment and are happy to confirm that we consider that this addresses the potential for harmful effects on the historic environment.



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Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Consequently, we are also happy to confirm that if such a policy is included in the Plan, based on what other limited information we have about the Plan, we now do **not** consider that the Plan should be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment. However, as before, we may wish to revise this opinion once we see the draft Plan, particularly if it does, contrary to the advised expectations, allocate a site or sites for development.

I would just suggest that the policy may need slight tweaking so as to specifically relate the conservation and enhancement of designated heritage assets to the consideration of proposals for development to be in accordance with paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework

Thank you again for seeking the views of Historic England on the Screening Opinion following this amendment. If you have any queries, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Small
Principal Adviser, Historic Environment Planning
(Bucks, Oxon, Berks, Hampshire, IoW, South Downs National Park and Chichester)

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