



Basingstoke
and Deane

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Sarah Jones
Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Parish Council

Sent via email:
n.plan.esbg@gmail.com
clerk@ecchinswell-pc.gov.uk

06 October 2022

Dear Sarah,

Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green 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 Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan. This updates the screening opinion issued in February 2022, to take into account the impact of residential development in the catchment of the River Test as part of the wider catchment of the Solent. The council's screening opinion has been underpinned by a detailed report and consultation with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.

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 Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan, and it would not need to be subject to HRA. The reasons for the decision are set out below:

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Following analysis undertaken to assess the effects on the environment resulting from the Ecchinswell, Bishops Green and Sydmonton Neighbourhood Plan including from the scale of development and other policies proposed, it is considered effects on the environment are likely and therefore a SEA is considered to be required.

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.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

There are three European sites within a 10km buffer zone of the neighbourhood area, however the draft plan is proposing to allocate a small amount of development (potentially approximately 20 units) and includes policies to protect the historic and natural environment.

It is noted that some of the Parish is within the catchment of the River Test (and the catchment of the Solent). However, the Plan is not proposing to allocate any development sites within the affected area and includes policies to restrict new residential development in the countryside and protect the natural environment.

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](#).

It is therefore considered that there are not likely to be significant effects on any European sites flowing from the Neighbourhood Plan and that an HRA is not required. Further information on the above can be found within the final version of the Ecchinswell, Bishops Green and Sydmonton Neighbourhood Plan Screening Report (October 2022). The responses from the consultation bodies can be found in Appendix 5 of the document.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me on Jessica.Wells@basingstoke.gov.uk or on 01256 845450.

Yours sincerely

Jessica Wells
Planning Policy Officer

Enc. Final version of the Neighbourhood Plan Screening Report (October 2022)

CC: Marian Dain