



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement

**Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
October 2013**

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process to ensure that opportunities for public involvement are provided and the significant environmental effects arising from policies, plans and programmes are:

- 1) Identified.
- 2) Assessed.
- 3) Mitigated.
- 4) Communicated to decision-makers.
- 5) Monitored.

A particular form of SEA has been introduced by a European Union Directive¹ known as the SEA Directive. This Directive was transposed into English law through 'The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes'² which lays out the legal requirements to comply with the Directive.

The objective of an SEA is *"to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development"*.

How does it relate to LTP3?

Bracknell Forest Council carried out an SEA alongside the preparation of its Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

The aim of this SEA is to ensure that the considerations of sustainable development and environmental protection are ingrained into the plan-making process, influencing all stages of the LFRMS.

Purpose of SEA Statement

The SEA Directive (Article 9(1)) requires authorities to explain in an SEA Statement how they have taken the findings of the assessment into account and this Statement must be made available to the public alongside the adopted plan. In addition full details of the SEA process are set out in an Environmental Report submitted with the plan.

The full SEA Environmental Report can be downloaded at: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk or is available by request via development.plan@bracknell-forest.gov.uk or 01344 352000.

Process

In February 2013 a Scoping Report was produced by Bracknell Forest Council. This was sent out to consultation with the 3 statutory organisations with environmental responsibility, which helped develop and refine the assessment methodology. This scoping occurred at a stage, which enabled environmental information to be fed through to the authors of the LFRMS.

Two strategic alternatives were appraised:

- Option 1 being no LFRMS; and
- Option 2 being the provision of the LFRMS. Option 2 resulted in an overwhelming positive affect and therefore this option was taken forward for further Objective led appraisals.

This assessment is in the context of other guidance and targets, and requires the prediction of significant environmental effects against baseline data. The full process is reported in this the Environmental Report. Comments received on this document have been incorporated into the final Environmental Report and SEA Statement, along side the final LFRMS. These documents will demonstrate how the process has informed decisions in the LFRMS and summarises the changes made as a result of SEA.

There has been a close working relationship between the plan-makers and the SEA officer throughout the whole of the SEA process, to ensure any relevant suggestions have been integrated from an early stage.

- An assessment of LFRMS Objectives showed that there is an overwhelming positive affect resulting from the 8 objectives.

Summary of Environmental Impacts

No significant environmental effects were predicted as a result of the appraisal work. However recommendations were made against certain LFRMS objectives to for example maintain existing Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and keep existing records on flooding and pollution episodes up to date.

Public Involvement

There has been two consultation stages the first being the SEA Scoping Report, which set out the methodology for, and the extent of the assessment and the second being the Draft SEA , which set out the significant impacts arising from various objectives within the LFRMS. Comments received following consultation on the Draft version of the SEA fed into the preparation of the Final SEA and Final LFRMS.

What difference has the process made?

So far the SEA process has enabled the incorporation of environmental and sustainability considerations in strategic decision making. This has been possible by commencing the SEA early in the plan-making process and appraising the environmental implications of the provisional LFRMS before finalising and adopting the strategy.

The SEA has indicated that the LFRMS is likely to have positive environmental effects. In fact, the LFRMS seeks improvements from the 'no plan' option across the range of SEA objectives, in particular flood risk, water quality and addressing the implications of climate change.

Future stages

The main report is the Final Environmental Report. This report sets out any future mitigation measures and future monitoring.