



# **Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Opinion**

**July 2018**

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## **1.0 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 This statement sets out the Council's consideration under Regulation 9 (1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 on whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required for the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan (BNP). This statement also sets out the Council's consideration as to whether Appropriate Assessment is required under Regulations 105 and 106 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017.
- 1.2 In September 2016, the Council issued a Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Opinion<sup>1</sup>. It concluded that the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan did need to be subject to SEA but did not require a full Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to be undertaken. Consultation was undertaken with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England as part of this process; responses are provided in Appendix A.
- 1.3 At that time, both Natural England and the Environment Agency had no comment to make. However, Historic England identified that the policies relating to parkland features, infill/windfall development and the refurbishment of the Railway Station could lead to potential effects (either positive or negative) on the historic environment of the town. In addition, they identified that policies in 'general conformity' with the strategic policies in the Bracknell Forest Local Plan does give scope for the Neighbourhood Plan to include policies that would lead to environmental effects that have not been assessed at the higher Local Plan level. As a result Historic England was not able to form a definitive opinion as to whether or not the Plan should be subject to SEA. Subsequent to consultation, Bracknell Forest Council took the view that SEA was required. It was noted that the screening opinion was a 'snapshot in time' and that if the issues addressed in the BNP should change, or be clarified, then a new screening process may be required.
- 1.4 Bracknell Town Council submitted a further SEA and HRA Screening request on 24 May 2018, the request included a revised list of policies. This 2018 Screening Opinion updates the original 2016 Screening Opinion based on the revised submission and associated consultation.

### ***Strategic Environmental Assessment***

- 1.5 Under the requirements of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive)) and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) specific types of plans that set out the framework for future development consent of projects must be subject to an environmental assessment.
- 1.6 There are exceptions to this requirement for plans that determine the use of a small area at a local level and for minor modifications if it has been determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.
- 1.7 In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004)(Regulation 9(1)), the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/bracknell-town-neighbourhood-area>

Council must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. Where the Council determines that SEA is not required then under Regulation 9(3) the Council must prepare a statement setting out the reasons for this determination.

### ***Habitats Regulations Assessment***

1.8 In accordance with The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) Regulations 105 and 106, where a land use plan—

- a. is likely to have a significant effect on a European site...(either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and
- b. is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site,

the plan-making authority for that plan must, before the plan is given effect, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives. The plan-making authority must for the purposes of the assessment consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any representations made by that body within such reasonable time as the authority specifies. The plan-making authority must also, if it considers it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if it does so, it must take such steps for that purpose as it considers appropriate.

- 1.9 In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 107 (considerations of overriding public interest), the plan-making authority must give effect to the land use plan only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site.
- 1.10 A qualifying body which submits a proposal for a neighbourhood development plan (in this case Bracknell Town Council) must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment under regulation 105 or to enable it to determine whether that assessment is required. Section 4 of this report deals with the Screening of Likely Significant Effects.

## **2.0 Scope of the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan**

2.1 Bracknell Forest Council designated the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Area on 11 February 2014. The Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan (BNP) is being prepared by Bracknell Town Council and Bracknell residents.

### **2016**

2.2 This screening updates the original Screening Opinion issued in September 2016 which was based on the document 'Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan – short summaries of draft policies' received by BFC on 26 July 2016. The key objectives of the plan at that time were:

- Key Objective 1: Improve social, community and leisure facilities
- Key Objective 2: Ensure the range of available housing is adequate for local residents, and for growth
- Key Objective 3: Improve the vibrancy of the town centre, and the attractiveness of the town as a whole
- Key Objective 4: To strengthen the local employment base and attract a wide variety of businesses to Bracknell
- Key Objective 5: Strengthen the local transport infrastructure to ensure that the growth of Bracknell is sustainable.

2.3 In July 2016, the proposed scope included policies relating to:

- Environment and community in Bracknell, including:
  - Parks, play areas, sports pitches
  - Public open space
  - Local Green spaces
  - Trees
  - Parkland features
  - Allotment spaces
  - Cemetery
  - Air quality
  - Low energy in new buildings
  - Electric vehicle charging points
  - Co-location of community facilities
- Housing in Bracknell
  - Dwelling mix
  - Design
  - Infill/windfall and backland development
  - Streetscape management
  - Connected private green space
  - Rainwater harvesting in new developments
- Employment and economy in Bracknell
  - Superfast broadband
  - Small scale social enterprises and live work units
- Transport and infrastructure in Bracknell
  - North-south cycleway
  - Pedestrian links
  - Cycle racks
  - Streetscene of garage blocks

- Residents parking schemes
- Bus service
- Public toilets
- Refurbishment Bracknell Railway Station

2.4 In July 2016, the screening request states that it is envisaged that the Plan will:

- Not allocate sites for development
- Not contain policies that may affect sensitive natural or heritage assets located in or in proximity to the Neighbourhood Area including the Thames Basin Heath SPA.

## 2018

2.5 This screening is based on the document 'Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan 2016 to 2036, SEA and HRA Screening' document received by email on 24 May 2018; and further clarifications received by email on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018. The former is presented in Appendix B (including the intent of each of the proposed policies). In summary, it is envisaged that the Plan will:

- Not allocate sites for development
- Not contain policies that may affect sensitive natural or heritage assets located in or in proximity to the Neighbourhood Area including the Thames Basin Heath SPA.
- Include policies relating to:
  - Environment and Community – Environment
    - Community Leisure Provision: Active Open Space Public Value (OSPV)
    - Community Leisure Provision: Passive Open Space Public Value (OSPV)
    - Protection & Maintenance of Local Green Space: Designation Thereof
    - Tree Heritage: Avenues of Trees\*
    - Tree Landscape Character\*
    - Trees as a Visual Amenity\*
    - Allotments
    - Cemetery Space
    - Watercourses and River Corridors\*
    - Air Quality
  - Environment and Community – Community
    - Arts Centre: South Hill Park\*
    - Colocation of Community Facilities
    - Protection of Community Facilities\*
  - Heritage\*
    - Protection of Parkland Features of Historic Parks and Gardens\*
    - Protection of Heritage Assets\*
    - Heritage Assets, Historical Buildings and their Settings\*
  - Housing and Character
    - Matching Housing Supply to Demand\*
    - Housing Mix\*
    - Infill & Backland Development
    - Houses in Multiple Occupation\*
    - Driveways & Hardstandings on Front Gardens\*
    - Managing the Streetscape

- Private Gardens: Green Space Biodiversity Corridors
  - Home Fire Sprinkler Systems\*
  - Buildings: Energy Efficiency & Generation\*
- Character\*
  - Buildings: Local Character\*
  - Buildings: Good Quality Design
- Economy and Employment
  - Employment and Enterprise: Small Business and Retail Units
  - Micro and Small Businesses
  - Neighbourhood Shopping Centres: Day to Day Requirements\*
  - Bracknell and Wokingham College and Bracknell Open Learning Centre\*
  - Town Centre Future Development Sites: Mixed Housing and Retail Uses\*
  - Broadband
- Transport and Infrastructure
  - Cycleways
  - Cycleways and Footpaths
  - Cycle racks
  - Garage Block Areas: Configuration and Use
  - School Drop-off and Pick Up areas\*
  - Buses
  - Public Toilets in Bracknell Town Centre
  - Roads and Transport: Traffic and the Environment\*

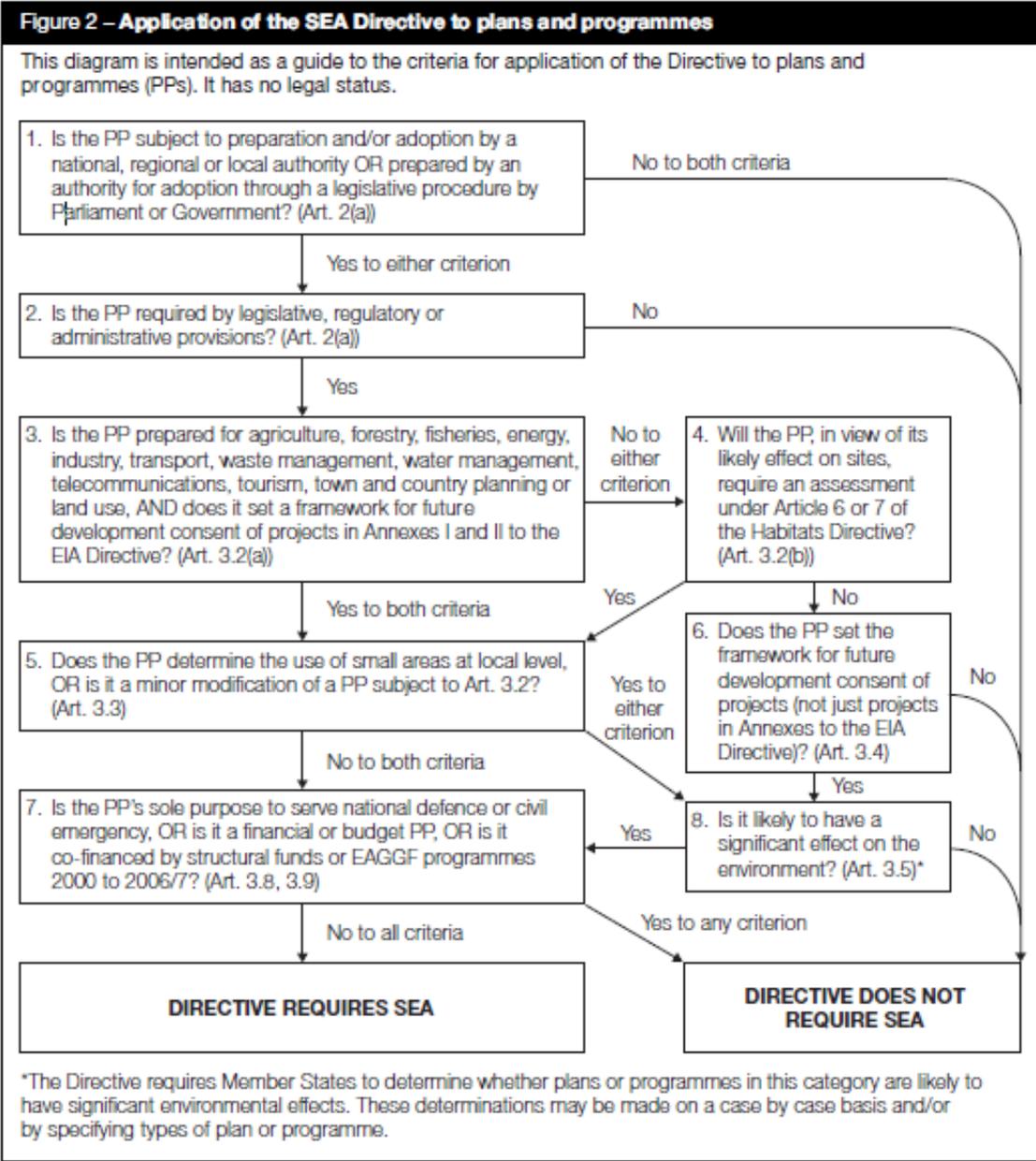
2.6 Those policy areas marked with an asterisk in the list above are considered to be new (or expanded) policies relative to the 2016 screening opinion. In terms of the original 2016 list of policies, electric vehicle charging points and rainwater harvesting in new developments are no longer listed.

### **3.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening**

#### ***The SEA Screening Process***

- 3.1 The process for determining whether or not an SEA is required is called screening. In order to screen, it is necessary to determine if a plan will have significant environmental effects using the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations. A determination cannot be made until the three statutory consultation bodies have been consulted.
- 3.2 Within 28 days of making its determination the authority must publish a statement setting out its decision. If it determines that an SEA is not required, the statement must include the reasons for this.
- 3.3 A draft document was subject to consultation from 21 June 2018 to 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018 with the relevant bodies. Their comments are included in this final version in which the Council has also set out its final determination.
- 3.4 Practical guidance to the SEA Directive, published by the Department of Environment in 2005 but still relevant, provides a useful diagram of the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs) shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes**



3.5 The process in Figure 1 has been undertaken and the findings can be viewed in Table 1. This shows the assessment of whether the BNP will require a full SEA. The questions in Table 1 are drawn from Figure 1 above which sets out how the SEA Directive should be applied.

**Table 1: Assessment of Characteristics of a Neighbourhood Plan**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Y/N</b>	<b>Reasoning</b>
1. Is the PP (plan or programme) 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))	Y	Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) are prepared by a qualifying body (Parish/Town Councils) under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The preparation of NDPs is subject to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and the Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012. A NDP is subject to independent examination and local referendum and subject to the outcome of those, will be 'made' by the Council. The process is prescribed by legislation.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? ((Art. 2 (a))	N	The preparation of an NDP is optional. However, once 'made' it will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area and be used when making decisions on planning applications in the area it covers.
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes 1 and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2 (a))	Y	A NDP can include these policy areas and is primarily prepared for the purposes of town and country planning and land use. It does set out a framework for development within the BNP area, including Infrastructure development which may fall under no. 10 of Annex II of the EIA Directive (for example, for potential social/community infrastructure which may fall under 'urban development' project).
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))	N	A NDP could potentially have impacts on sites covered by the Habitats Regulations. However, this requires individual assessment of a NDP (see Section 4).
5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at a local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art.3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Y	A NDP can determine the use of small areas at a 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)	Y	Once 'made' a NDP forms part of the Development Plan and will be used in the decision making process on planning applications. It therefore, sets the framework for future developments at a local level.
7. Is the PP's 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 programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art.	N	NDP does not deal with these issues.

Stage	Y/N	Reasoning
3.8. 3.9)		
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art.3.5)	N/K	A NDP could potentially have an effect on the environment. However, whether this is significant depends on the proposals within the NDP. This requires detailed assessment of the NDP – (see Table 2).

3.6 The conclusion of the assessment in Table 1 is that depending on the content of a Neighbourhood Development Plan, an SEA may be required. For this reason a specific assessment of the BNP is required to determine the likely significant effects.

### **Likely Significant Effects**

3.7 To decide whether a draft Neighbourhood Development Plan might have significant environmental effects, its potential scope should be assessed against the criteria set out in Schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Using the information supplied by Bracknell Town Council at the current stage of preparation (see Section 2 for the broad scope of the BNP as currently drafted), the assessment in Table 2 has been made:

**Table 2: Assessment of likely significant effects against Schedule 1 criteria**

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
<b>1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular to:</b>		
1a) 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.	No	The BNP sets out a local policy framework for development proposals but does not specify particular locations for development. It supports the implementation of policies in the adopted Core Strategy and Site Allocations Local Plan which have already been subject to SEA and assessed as having no significant environmental effects.
1b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	No	The BNP must be in conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan for Bracknell Forest. It supports the implementation of strategic policies at the local level. It is not therefore considered to have significant influence on other plans and programmes or the environment.
1c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	No	The BNP contributes, as required, to the achievement of sustainable development as set out in the higher level Development Plan. Policies set out in the BNP are planned to have a positive impact on local environmental assets (for example

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
		cycleways and green spaces) and places valued by local people in the NDP area. The likelihood of significant effects on the environment is, therefore, minimised.
1d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme:	No	The BNP seeks to minimise existing environmental problems in the area. The Plan does not allocate sites or propose development that would give rise to environmental problems.
1e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	No	The BNP is not directly relevant to the implementation of Community legislation. Whilst it supports small scale social enterprises, small and micro business and retail units, it does not allocate potentially polluting development.
<b>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard in particular to:</b>		
2a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	No	It is unlikely that there will be any irreversible damaging environmental impacts associated with the BNP. Policies seek to protect and improve the environment.
2b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	The cumulative effects of policies within the BNP are unlikely to result in negative effects, but more likely to have a positive impact.
2c) the transboundary nature of the effects	No	The proposals within the BNP are unlikely to have a significant impact on neighbouring areas.
2d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	No	No risks to human health or the environment have been identified as a result of draft policies in the BNP.
2e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No	The BNP is concerned with development within Bracknell Town Parish which has an area of 16.7 km <sup>2</sup> and a population of over half of the total population of the Borough (around 118,000 in 2014). The extent of any effects is therefore likely to be limited and minimal.
2f) 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 of limit values;	No	Within the Neighbourhood Area there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a number of listed buildings</li> <li>• one Conservation Area (Easthampstead)</li> <li>• one Historic Parks and Garden (South Hill Park)</li> </ul>

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
or iii) intensive land-use.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• several Ancient Woodlands</li> <li>• two Scheduled Ancient Monuments</li> <li>• Flood Zones 3 and 2</li> <li>• Several Local Wildlife Sites</li> <li>• Air Quality Management Area</li> </ul> <p>The Neighbourhood Area does not contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), however the parish boundary is adjacent to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and several SSSIs</li> <li>• Groundwater Source Protection Zone</li> </ul> <p>The BNP is not allocating sites for development and policies must be generally aligned with strategic policies such as the Bracknell Forest Local Plan and national policies – these strategic policies have been subject to SEA in their development. As such, the BNP is unlikely to adversely affect the value and vulnerability of the area in relation to its natural characteristics; due to exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or intensive land use.</p> <p>The BNP provides opportunity to provide greater support for those assets to be enhanced through policies relating to the protection of parkland features of historic Parks and Gardens; the protection of heritage assets, historical buildings and their settings; air quality; greenspace, open space, tree heritage, river corridors etc.</p> <p>The Plan will contain a number and range of policies, including those relating to matching housing supply to demand; housing mix; infill/backland development; employment and enterprise, micro and small</p>

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
		<p>businesses; town centre future development sites. The Town Council have confirmed that these policies are intended to influence such developments that come forward (through planning applications or allocations within the Local Plan), rather than proposing sites for development.</p> <p>Overall, policies within the plan would be intended to manage the potential effects (either positive or negative) of such developments on the historic environment of the town and aspects of the natural environment. These relevant policies include those relating to the protection of parkland features of historic Parks and Gardens; and the protection of heritage assets, historical buildings and their settings and other policies relating to the natural environment.</p>
2g) the effects on areas of landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	No	It is not considered that the draft policies in the BNP will adversely affect areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status. Policies do not allocate land for development and seek to protect green spaces.

### Screening Outcome

3.8 Having reviewed the criteria, the Council has concluded that the emerging BNP is not likely to have a significant environmental effect and accordingly will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The main reasons for this conclusion are:

- The BNP is not allocating land for development. Where development is coming forward by other means (such as planning applications or allocation with the Local Plan), policies are proposed to control such developments in relation to issues such as matching housing supply to demand; housing mix; the protection of parkland features of historic Parks and Gardens; the protection of heritage assets, historical buildings and their settings; air quality; greenspace, open space, tree heritage, river corridors etc. The BNP supports the strategic development needs set out in the adopted Development Plan, including the Bracknell Forest Core Strategy and Site Allocations Local Plan which have already been subject to SEA and assessed as having no significant environmental effects;

- The BNP must support and uphold the general principle of strategic policies in the Development Plan for Bracknell Forest, and therefore has no, or limited influence on other plans or programmes;
- The BNP seeks to avoid or minimise environmental effects through guidance on issues which should be considered when determining development proposals within the Neighbourhood Area. The BNP may therefore have a positive environmental effect; and,
- The BNP does not allocate any sites for development.

#### **4.0 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening for Likely Significant Effects**

- 4.1 Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan is a plan which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site.
- 4.2 There are two European Sites partly located within Bracknell Forest – Windsor Forest and Great Park Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Appendices C and D contain detailed descriptions of these sites including their Conservation Objectives and a Description of Potential Adverse Effects on Site Integrity.
- 4.3 No European sites fall within the boundary of the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan area. However, much of the southern boundary is within 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA); the remainder of the Plan area falls within 5km of the SPA. Within this area all new residential development is considered to have the potential to affect the integrity of the SPA, through for example, potential additional recreational pressure.
- 4.4 Bracknell Town Council has confirmed that the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for development. The Plan is therefore:
- unlikely to lead to a net increase in dwellings (an increase in dwellings up to 7km from the SPA could lead to a likely significant effect on the SPA as a result of an increase in recreational visits)
  - unlikely to lead to an increase in traffic movements within 200m of the SPA or SAC (an increase in traffic movements could increase air pollution leading to a likely significant effect on the SPA and SAC air pollution from outside the SPA and SAC).
- 4.5 Existing plans and proposals must be considered when assessing new plans or programme for likely significant effects as they may create ‘in combination’ effects. As the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan is not proposing to allocate sites, does not contain policies which would lead to development and will be required to be in general conformity with existing strategic policies in the Development Plan which have been assessed at a higher level to determine possible in-combination effects, it is concluded that no significant in-combination likely effects will occur due to its implementation.
- 4.6 Based on the information provided by Bracknell Town Council and Appendices C and D the Council can therefore rule out ‘likely significance effects’ on the SPA and SAC (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) because the proposal does not undermine the Conservation Objectives of these sites.
- 4.7 As the ‘likely significance effects’ can be ruled out at this stage the it can be concluded that an Appropriate Assessment is not required to be undertaken.

## **5.0 Conclusions**

### ***SEA Assessment***

- 5.1 On the basis of the SEA Screening Assessment set out in Table 2 above, it is concluded that the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan will not have significant effects in relation to any of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, and therefore does not need to be subject to a SEA Report.

### ***Habitats Regulations Assessment***

- 5.3 The screening assessment concludes that no likely significant effects are likely to occur with regards to the integrity of the European sites within and around Bracknell Forest Borough, due to the implementation of the draft BNP. As such the BNP does not require a full Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken.
- 5.4 Nevertheless, any net gain in residential development that takes place within the relevant part of the Neighbourhood Area will have to comply with the retained Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan, Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy relating to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and related guidance. Allocated development has already been subject to a plan level Appropriate Assessment and avoidance and mitigation measures have been agreed with Natural England. An Appropriate Assessment is also undertaken at the planning application stage and NE is consulted where relevant.

### ***Consultation Responses***

- 5.5 From 21 June 2018 to 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018 a consultation was undertaken on a draft copy of this screening report with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. Consultation responses were received from Natural England and Historic England; these are contained in Appendix F. A Consultation Statement is included in Appendix G showing how the responses have been considered and taken into account.
- 5.6 Historic England confirmed their agreement that the plan does not appear likely to result in significant environmental effects within areas of interest to Historic England and, as such, do not request that SEA of it is required.
- 5.7 Natural England advised that in so far as their strategic environmental interests are concerned (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils), that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan. They confirmed that the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect. They are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies/proposals within the plan. They note that it remains the responsible authority's duty to provide sufficient information supporting this screening decision.

## APPENDIX A – 2016 Consultation Responses

From:  Turner, Marc (NE) <Marc.Turner@naturalengland.org.uk> Sent: Thu 25/08/2016 11:07  
To:  Cathy O'Connor  
Cc:  
Subject: RE: 2016-09-16 193279 SEA and HRA Screening Consultation: Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Cathy,

Thank you for the consultation on the above Neighbourhood Plan SEA and Habs Regs screening. Natural England has no comments on the document.

Kind Regards

Marc

Marc Turner  
Senior Adviser  
Sustainable Development and Regulation  
Thames Valley Team  
2nd Floor  
Cromwell House  
15 Andover Road  
Winchester  
SO23 7BT

Direct Dial: 02080267686

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england](http://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.

These services help applicants take appropriate account of environmental considerations at an early stage of project development, reduce uncertainty, reduce the risk of delay and added cost at a later stage, whilst securing good results for the natural environment.



Historic England

Cathy O'Connor  
Senior Environmental Policy Officer  
Design, Environment and Transport  
Environment, Culture and Communities  
Bracknell Forest Council  
Time Square  
Market Street  
Bracknell, RG12 1JD.

Our ref: HD/P6030/  
Your ref:  
Telephone 01483 252040  
Fax

15<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Dear Ms O'Connor,

### **Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan SEA/SA Screening**

Thank you for your e-mail of 12<sup>th</sup> August seeking the comments of Historic England on the Council's SEA/SA screening opinion for the Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan.

We note that the Council's draft Screening Report notes that within the Plan area there are a number of listed buildings, a conservation area, a registered historic park and garden and two scheduled monuments. It is therefore a sensitive historic environment and thus there is the potential for significant environmental effects arising from the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan, depending, of course, on what those are.

We note that it is not intended that the Plan allocates any sites for housing development. However, the Council's draft Screening Report indicates that the Plan will contain a number and range of policies, including those relating to parkland features, infill/windfall development and the refurbishment of the Railway Station. It is possible that one or more of these policies could lead to potential effects (either positive or negative) on the historic environment of the town, even if quite unintended or unrecognised.

As you and the Neighbourhood Plan body will be 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.

We hope you find these comments helpful. Should you wish to discuss any points within this letter, or if there are particular issues with the historic environment in Bracknell Town, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you again for consulting Historic England.

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](mailto:martin.small@historicengland.org.uk)

From:  Planning-Wallingford <planning-wallingford@environment-agency.gov.uk> Sent: Tue 30/08/2016 17:53  
To:  Cathy O'Connor  
Cc:  
Subject: RE: 160817/ER01 SEA and HRA Screening Consultation: Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Cathy,

Thank you for your email about the SEA screening report for the emerging Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan which was forwarded to us by our enquiries unit.

We have reviewed the environmental constraints within the plan area, and we have read your screening report. We note that you state that the plan will not allocate any sites for development. We note too your conclusion that the emerging Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have a significant environmental effect, and accordingly will not require a strategic environmental assessment. We agree with your conclusion that the emerging Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have a significant environmental effect.

We have no comment to make regarding the Habitats Regulations Assessment screening process.

Yours sincerely,

**Judith Johnson**  
Sustainable Places team

Environment Agency - Thames (Farnham)  
Goldcrest House, Alice Holt Lodge, Farnham, Surrey. GU10 4LH  
[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency)  
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## APPENDIX B – 2018 Policy List

### SEA HRA SCREENING

Environment and Community Environment		
Policy No	Policy Title	Policy Intent
EV1	Community Leisure Provision: active Open Space Public Value (OSPV)	To encourage protecting and enhancing Bracknell Town's current environmental asset of green spaces, especially its Recreational Facilities.  To maintain its character and use the standard based on that which was used in the development of Bracknell as a New Town to create residential areas of high environmental quality.
EV2	Community Leisure Provision: passive Open Space Public Value (OSPV)	To encourage protecting and enhancing Bracknell Town's current environmental asset of green spaces, especially its Recreational Facilities.
EV3	Protection & Maintenance of Local Green Space: Designation Thereof	To protect the green spaces listed from development to give all Bracknell Town's residents the maximum ensuing aesthetic, ecological and recreational benefits
EV4	Tree Heritage: Avenues of Trees	To retain beneficial, significant landscape features and, where reasonable, enhance these features. To increase the number and the variety of avenues of trees already planted and growing in Bracknell Town by planting new ones in future development.  The BFBC Development and Adoptions Manager's caveats that "The highway verges can – sometimes – provide access to sewers so it may not be possible to have tree planting on all sites and that trees need to be planted far enough back from the highway to avoid impacting visibility splays.", apply.
EV5	Tree Landscape Character	To further enrich the density and variety of the current tree landscape character of Bracknell Town.
EV6	Tree Heritage: Avenues of Trees	To further enrich the tree heritage of Bracknell Town
EV7	Trees as a Visual Amenity	
EV8	Allotments	To protect existing allotment provision in Bracknell Town and this kind of active open space of public value. <i>Any alternative allotment site offered will be of similar size and quality, within reasonable walking distance from existing ploholders' houses and will be given statutory protection.</i> says Caroline Foley in her book <i>Of Cabbages and Kings, The History of Allotments by Caroline Foley, Frances Lincoln, 4 Sept. 2014.</i> <i>The quotes in italics in this section are from pages 189, 203, 205 and 206.</i> To ensure the provision of allotments in new developments in Bracknell Town.
Policy No	Policy Title	Policy Intent

EV9	Cemetery Space	To ensure that there is sufficient cemetery space as part of its community facilities' infrastructure and that there is also specific land allocated in Bracknell Town in the emerging BFBC Comprehensive Local Plan for the growing population of Bracknell Town perhaps via contributions to the expense from its burial authority.
EV10	Watercourses and River Corridors.	<p>To enhance the character and the function of the watercourses and to improve public access including footpaths and their signposting to this important recreational resource for the local community.</p> <p>To open the watercourses up further as recreation routes for walking and cycling. This policy applies to land where public access has been intermittent, both inside and outside the current settlement boundaries, especially to the west, in the Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.</p> <p>To support partnership working to protect and encourage public access to Bracknell's watercourses and river corridors.</p> <p>To link up the footpaths along Bracknell's watercourses from Gormoor Brook to Jocks Lane and to signpost them so that residents find out that there is a north/south recreational link through the urban environment of the town.</p> <p>To ensure the green infrastructure associated with the watercourses &amp; river corridors is maintained and enhanced, for the benefit of both people and wildlife.</p> <p>To improve access in a way compatible with protecting the watercourses &amp; river environment.</p> <p>To prevent degradation of existing standards of provision and improve where applicable, if additional usage is likely to increase as a result of a specific development.</p>
EV11	Air Quality	To limit and mitigate any adverse effects on air quality and any ensuing harm to residents from air pollution in future development in Bracknell Town.
<b>Environment and Community</b>		
EV12	Arts Centre: South Hill Park	<p>To support SHP's 3 priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing increasingly high quality arts for and with the local community,</li> <li>• continuing to grow commercial activities,</li> </ul> <p>building a sustainable operation</p>
EV13	Colocation of Community Facilities	<p>To maximise the benefits of current community centres for Bracknell Town</p> <p>To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the Bracknell Town Community needs.</p> <p>To improve the efficiency of the land use of existing community facilities such as community centres and/or to create new multi-storey and/or multi-functional community hubs, where and if appropriate, on the same sites to incorporate suitable, additional, new community facilities on them.</p> <p>To sustain the overall provision of social infrastructure and its social, recreational and cultural benefits.</p>
<b>Policy No</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Policy Intent</b>

EV14	Protection of Community Facilities	To ensure that Bracknell residents continue to enjoy the maximum social, recreational and cultural benefits from their community buildings owned by their local district authority and, while doing this, to help third sector, (charity & voluntary), and faith sectors to support Bracknell Town's community activities. To support partnership working with and between these local, non- profit, organisations, especially Involve, by enabling the formation of an integrated, informed community engagement programme to identify the future needs of Bracknell Town's residents using its community buildings and facilities.
<b>Heritage</b>		
HE1	Protection of Parkland Features of Historic Parks and Gardens	To protect Bracknell Town's historic parks and gardens: Easthampstead Park which is registered both as UID1390331 GII and as UID1390332 GII, Lily Hill Park and South Hill Park which is registered both as UID 1390348 GII and as UID 1000591 on the National Heritage List for England see <a href="http://www.historicengland.org.uk">www.historicengland.org.uk</a> . This policy encourages preserving for the future specific parkland features at Easthampstead Park which are not currently specifically adequately protected.
HE2	Protection of Heritage Assets	To preserve Bracknell Town's heritage assets, their settings and buildings.
HE3	Heritage Assets, Historical Buildings and their Settings.	To clearly identify & maintain the settings of its listed buildings with the advice of a conservation officer.
<b>Housing and Character</b>		
HO1	Matching Housing Supply to Demand	To specifically understand the actual demand for smaller properties in Bracknell and to provide it in future development. To match supply to demand.
HO2	Housing Mix	To start to provide local new housing stock with adequate house space standards which aim to meet commonly recognised sets of standards.
HO3	Infill & Backland Development	To ensure the best possible design in new housing development, whether allocated or windfall, where infill, redevelopment or backland development is concerned, to respect the rhythm of streets established by plot width and building setback
HO4	Houses in Multiple Occupation	To be unambiguously specific about local planning HMO policy. To ensure there is no imbalance between the number of HMOs and other forms of residential property in any one street and so to prevent the character of any one area changing by undermining the maintenance of a balanced and mixed community.
HO5	Driveways & Hardstandings on Front Gardens	To maintain a balance between hard and soft landscaping and to contribute positively to the streetscene. To create an environment physically accessible to all users ie people and vehicles. To preserve the trees and grass verges which are an important feature of many streets and can provide an important habitat for wildlife. To mitigate the effect of increased winter rainfall in some areas (as much as 30% by 2080 (DEFRA) by using permeable materials and applying SuDS to hardstandings relatively cheaply and easily. This will help to even out the wastewater treatment cycle of partnership statutory authorities such as Thames Water.
<b>Policy No</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Policy Intent</b>
HO6	Managing the	To enable residents to recycle waste and manage environmentally

	Streetscape	responsible parking outside and adjacent to their homes.
HO7	Private Gardens: Green Space Biodiversity Corridors	To plan for integrated green spaces and encourage conserving and enhancing their biodiversity in the layout of future and existing development especially private gardens, (micro green infrastructures). and their connections to other green spaces in the Town's green infrastructure.
HO8	Home Fire Sprinkler Systems	To reduce the risk of fire in new housing by ensuring it is built to a safe and secure future design.
HO9	Buildings: Energy Efficiency & Generation	To encourage designing new housing to incorporate low energy features. To start to implement central government's zero carbon building policy. To encourage designing new housing to incorporate water saving measures.
<b>CHARACTER</b>		
HO10	Buildings: Local Character	To harmonise all existing developments' character and design with all new developments' character and design.
HO11	Buildings: Good Quality Design	
<b>Economy and Employment</b>		
EC1	Employment and Enterprise: Small Business and Retail Units	To encourage the sustainable growth - including the opportunity to work locally - of permanent small scale social enterprises and other businesses and to assist in making a broader economic base by encouraging the provision of appropriate buildings.
EC2	Micro and Small Businesses	To maintain a similar rate of business births per 10,000 resident adults aged 16 and over per year by providing a good variety of suitable business premises for small and micro businesses. To promote employment and economic enterprise in Bracknell Town by making available suitable business premises
EC3	Neighbourhood Shopping Centres: Day to Day Requirements.	To maintain the place of neighbourhood shopping centres in the hierarchy of Borough shopping centres NPPF 38 " For larger scale residential developments in particular, planning policies should promote a mix of uses in order to provide opportunities to undertake day to day activities including work on site. Where practical, particularly within large scale developments, key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties." To continue to promote neighbourhood economic development
EC4	Bracknell and Wokingham College and Bracknell Open Learning Centre	To work for Bracknell Town's economic prosperity by developing vocational and lifelong learning community skills training to the highest standard for its residents. To provide the best possible opportunities for vocational and lifelong learning community skills training.
<b>Policy No</b>	<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Policy Intent</b>
EC5	Town Centre Future	To plan for Bracknell Town's 21 <sup>st</sup> century sustainable future in

	Development Sites: Mixed Housing and Retail Uses	line with other New Towns around London by combining use class sites (especially housing) in multi-use developments.
EC6	Broadband	To reach 100% coverage for broadband speeds in existing and new developments. To further maximise productivity by providing the best possible broadband infrastructure ie fibre optic.
<b>Transport and Infrastructure</b>		
TR1	Cycleways	To continue to provide good quality, integrated and well-lit cycleways and footpaths, clear of vegetation.  To improve and extend the network of cycleways and pedestrian links in and around the town and also support proposals to fully link them to the surrounding parishes of Binfield, Crowthorne, Winkfield and Warfield.  There is no cycleway through route crossing the town centre which is needed.  The station needs more cycle racks to enable actual transport modal shift.
TR2	Cycleways and Footpaths	
TR3	Cycle racks	
TR4	Garage Block Areas: Configuration and Use	To encourage the efficient use of land and to improve the character of existing neighbourhoods surrounding them.
TR5	School Drop-off and Pick Up areas	To improve the management of school drop-off and pick-up areas in Bracknell Town.
TR6	Buses	To improve the free flow of traffic in and around Bracknell Town by encouraging a greater use of public transport especially of buses. To promote greater use of- sustainable- public transport.
TR7	Public Toilets in Bracknell Town Centre	To continue to provide and improve public toilets in Bracknell Town Centre.
TR8	Roads and Transport: Traffic and the Environment	To mitigate the various effects of any development where the assessed traffic impacts within the town have a material adverse effect on the roads and on residential amenity, particularly safety, noise, and air quality

## APPENDIX C - Windsor Forest and Great Park Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC is a large area of continuous woodland. The SAC covers a total area of 1,687.26 hectares. The predominant habitat is mixed woodland (95%). There are also areas of dry grasslands (4.5%) and inland water bodies (0.5%). The soil and geology is a mix of acidic, clay, neutral and sand. The geomorphology and landscape is classified as lowland. The SAC represents old acidophilous oak woods in the south-eastern part of its UK range. It has the largest number of veteran oaks *Quercus spp.* in Britain (and possibly in Europe), a consequence of its long continuity of management. Windsor Forest is listed as the most important site in the UK for fauna associated with decaying timber on ancient trees (oak spp, beech, and other species of tree). It is of importance for its range and diversity of saproxylic invertebrates, including many rare species (e.g. the beetle *Lacon querceus*). The SAC is thought to support the largest of the known populations in the UK of European important Violet click beetle *Limoniscus violaceus*. It is also recognised as having rich fungal assemblages. Atlantic acidophilous beech forest habitat is present at the site and supports many of the important invertebrate and fungi assemblage

### Qualifying Features

- H9120 Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with *Ilex* and sometimes also *Taxus* in the shrublayer (*Quercion robori-petraeae* or *Ilici-Fagenion*); Beech forests on acid soils
- H9190 Old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains; Dry oak-dominated woodland
- S1079 *Limoniscus violaceus*; Violet click beetle

### Conservation Objectives

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.

### SSSI Condition

The table below provides information on the condition of the SSSI making up the SAC.

Condition of Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI

Condition	% of Area
Favourable	51.84%
Unfavourable recovering	48.16%
Unfavourable no change	0%
Unfavourable declining	0%
Destroyed / Part destroyed	0%

Description of Potential Adverse Effects on Site Integrity

The Natura 2000 Standard Data Form for the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC (dated 25 January 2016) identifies the following negative threats, pressures which may have a negative impact on the site as:

- Air pollution, air-borne pollutants (from inside and outside the SAC)
- Invasive non-native species (from inside and outside the SAC)
- Forest and Plantation management and use (inside the SAC)
- Interspecific floral relations (inside the SAC)

## APPENDIX D - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)

The Thames Basin Heaths SPA was proposed in October 2000, and full SPA status was approved on 9 March 2005. It is an example of a heathland landscape based within a highly active economy. It consists of a composite site covering an area of some 8,274 hectares, consisting of 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) scattered from Hampshire in the west, to Berkshire in the north, through to Surrey.

The habitat consists of both dry and wet heathland, mire, oak, birch acid woodland, gorse scrub and acid grassland with areas of rotational conifer plantation.

### Qualifying Species

This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive as it is used by 1% or more of the Great Britain population of species of European Importance listed in Annex I of the Directive. During the breeding season this includes:

- Dartford warbler (*Sylvia undata*)
- Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*)
- Woodlark (*Lullula arborea*)

The SPA supports the second largest concentration of Dartford warbler in Great Britain, the third largest number of woodlark, and the fourth largest population of breeding nightjars.

### Non Qualifying Species of Interest

Hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), merlin (*Falco columbarius*), short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus*) and kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) (all Annex I species) occur in non-breeding numbers of less than 1% of the GB population.

### Seasonality

The breeding season of the protected bird species occurs predominantly in April, May, June and July, but an extended season can occur between February and August, therefore this is when the ground-nesting species are most vulnerable to disturbance. The breeding season for nightjar occurs from mid-May through to August, with a peak in June; woodlark nest from March until July, but commence territorial activity from early February; the Dartford warbler generally breeds between April and August. Territorial activity may begin as early as February and, as yet, there is no indication of how climate change might affect the breeding season.

### Conservation Objectives

The conservation objective for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA is "*Subject to natural change, to maintain, in favourable condition, the habitats for the populations of Annex 1 bird species of European importance, with particular reference to lowland heathland and rotationally managed plantation.*"

The above conservation objective can be broken down into its separate components to assist with the HRA and impact prediction:

- To maintain, in favourable condition, lowland heathland and rotationally managed plantation to provide habitats for Annex I breeding bird populations of woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler.
- To maintain the geographical extent of the habitat area.

- To sustain and improve population numbers of woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler.

#### SSSI Condition

The two areas of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA that lie within Bracknell Borough are the Broadmoor to Bagshot Heaths SSSI and the Sandhurst to Owlsmoor Bogs and Heaths (also known as Wildmoor Heath) SSSI. The condition of these SSSIs is shown below.

#### Condition of Broadmoor to Bagshot Woods and Heaths SSSI

Condition	% of Area
Favourable	75.63%
Unfavourable recovering	23.83%
Unfavourable no change	0.55%
Unfavourable declining	0%
Destroyed / part destroyed	0%

#### Condition of Sandhurst to Owlsmoor Bogs and Heaths (also known as Wildmoor Heath) SSSI

Condition	% of Area
Favourable	0%
Unfavourable recovering	100%
Unfavourable no change	0%
Unfavourable declining	0%
Destroyed / part destroyed	0%

#### Ecological Requirements of the Qualifying Species

- **Dartford warbler** - Large unbroken dwarf-shrub layer of heather with scattered gorse; abundance of shrub layer invertebrates; mix of heather trees and gorse amongst heathland vegetation; reduction in displacement of birds; extent and distribution of habitat area.
- **Nightjar** - Abundance of night flying insects; open ground with predominantly low vegetation bare patches and sparse woodland/scrub cover; reduction in displacement of birds; extent and distribution of habitat area.
- **Woodlark** - Abundance of ground surface invertebrates; mix of shrub/tree cover, short-medium vegetation and bare ground; reduction in displacement of birds; extent and distribution of habitat area.

#### Description of Potential Adverse Effects on Site Integrity

The Natura 2000 Standard Data Form for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA (dated 25 January 2016) identifies the following threats and pressures which may have a negative impact on the site as:

- Air pollution, air-borne pollutants (from inside and outside the SPA)
- Other human intrusions and disturbances (from inside the SPA)
- Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities (from inside the SPA)
- Biocenotic evolution, succession (from inside the SPA)
- Forest and Plantation management & use (from inside the SPA)

Source: European Site Conservation Objectives for Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Site Code: UK9012141 (Natural England) <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4952859267301376>

## APPENDIX E – 2016 Consultation Statement

Consultee	Section	Comment	Officer Response	Recommendation
<b>Natural England</b>	General	Natural England has no comments on the document.	Noted.	No change
<b>Historic England</b>	SEA	<p>We note that the Council's draft Screening Report notes that within the Plan area there are a number of listed buildings, a conservation area, a registered historic park and garden and two scheduled monuments. It is therefore a sensitive historic environment and thus there is the potential for significant environmental effects arising from the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan, depending, of course, on what those are.</p> <p>We note that it is not intended that the Plan allocates any sites for housing development. However, the Council's draft Screening Report indicates that the Plan will contain a number and range of policies, including those relating to parkland features, infill/windfall development and the refurbishment of the Railway Station. It is possible that one or more of these policies could lead to potential effects (either positive or negative) on the historic environment of the town, even if quite unintended or unrecognised.</p> <p>We are aware that the Bracknell Forest Local Plan has itself been subject to SEA,</p>	Noted. To take a precautionary approach, the BNP will be screened as requiring an SEA at the current time. If the issues addressed in the BNP should change, or be clarified, then a new screening process may be required when further information becomes available as to the scope of the policies.	<p>Change to screening outcome.</p> <p>Table 2: amend assessment against criteria 2f.</p> <p>Screening outcome (paras 3.8 to 3.10) amended – SEA is required. If the issues addressed in the BNP should change, or be clarified, then a new screening process may be required.</p> <p>Section 5, Conclusions, Consultation Responses amended.</p>

		<p>but the Neighbourhood Plan only has to be in “general conformity” with the strategic policies of that Plan, which does give scope for the Neighbourhood Plan to include policies that would lead to environmental effects that have not been assessed at the higher Local Plan level.</p> <p>Therefore, without actually seeing a draft copy of the Plan’s policies and proposals, we are not able to form a definitive opinion as to whether or not the Plan should be subject to SEA. If the Council and Neighbourhood Plan body wish to proceed on the basis that a SEA is not necessary, we would not object, but both should be aware that we might form the view that a SEA is necessary once we have seen the draft Plan.</p> <p>As you and the Neighbourhood Plan body will be 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.</p>		
<b>Historic England</b>	SEA		Noted	No change

<b>Environment Agency</b>	SEA	We have reviewed the environmental constraints within the plan area, and we have read your screening report. We note that you state that the plan will not allocate any sites for development. We note too your conclusion that the emerging Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have a significant environmental effect, and accordingly will not require a strategic environmental assessment. We agree with your conclusion that the emerging Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have a significant environmental effect.	Noted	No change
<b>Environment Agency</b>	HRA	We have no comment to make regarding the Habitats Regulations Assessment screening process.	Noted	No change

## APPENDIX F – 2018 Consultation Responses

From:  Lloyd Sweet, Robert <Robert.LloydSweet@HistoricEngland.org.uk> Sent: Thu 26/07/2018 17:23  
To:  Development Plan  
Cc:  
Subject: Fw: Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA Screening

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comments on the updated screening opinion for the Bracknell Town Centre Conservation Area. We are happy to confirm our agreement that the plan does not appear likely to result in significant environmental effects within areas of interest to Historic England and, as such, we would not request that SEA of it is required. This is without prejudice to comments we may wish to make on individual applications coming forward within the plan area or comments we may wish to make on the plan or its proposed policies.

In coming to this view we have made use of your draft screening report and the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation draft of the plan.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries relating to our comments.

Yours faithfully

Robert Lloyd-Sweet

Robert Lloyd-Sweet | Historic Places Adviser | Historic Places | South East  
Mobile: 07825 907288

Historic England | Eastgate Court | 195 – 205 High Street  
Guildford | GU1 3EH

Date: 24 July 2018  
Our ref: 250254  
Your ref: Bracknell Town NP – SEA & HRA Screen



Development Plan Team  
Planning, Transport and Countryside  
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Dear Sir or Madam

#### **Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA Screening**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018, which included your updates to the original Screening Opinion based on the revised submission.

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 (SEA) / Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests are concerned (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 SEA Directive 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.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

Yours faithfully

Sharon Jenkins  
Consultations Team

## APPENDIX G – 2018 Consultation Statement

Consultee	Section	Comment	Officer Response	Recommendation
<p><b>Natural England</b></p>	<p>SEA/HRA</p>	<p>It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests are concerned (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.</p> <p>Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans in light of the SEA Directive is contained within the <a href="#">National Planning Practice Guidance</a>. The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development</li> <li>• the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p>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.</p> <p>We are not aware of <u>significant</u> 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.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>No change</p>

		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.		
<b>Natural England</b>	General	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.	Noted	No change
<b>Historic England</b>	SEA	We are happy to confirm our agreement that the plan does not appear likely to result in significant environmental effects within areas of interest to Historic England and, as such, we would not request that SEA of it is required. This is without prejudice to comments we may wish to make on individual applications coming forward within the plan area or comments we may wish to make on the plan or its proposed policies.  In coming to this view we have made use of your draft screening report and the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation draft of the plan.	Noted. (Change to screening outcome since 2016 Screening Decision – SEA is not required.)	No change (to June 2018 Draft Screening Report.)