



Final Strategic Environmental

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

October 2013

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Non-Technical Summary

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from policies, plans and programmes are identified, assessed, mitigated, communicated to decision-makers, monitored and that opportunities for public involvement are provided.

A particular form of SEA has been introduced by the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC, also known as the SEA Directive. This Directive was transposed into English law through 'The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes' [Statutory Instrument 2004 No 1633] 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 this relate to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS)?

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.

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.

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.

1. Introduction

Purpose of This Document

- 1.1 This document comprises the Final Strategic Environmental Assessment Report of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and is the third stage in this process. This report considers and takes on-board consultation responses received as a result of the draft report consultation procedure.
- 1.2 An essential consideration when drawing up strategies and plans is their effect on the environment and people's quality of life, both now and in the future. To help address this, a **Strategic Environmental Assessment** is carried out alongside the preparation of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) to make sure environmental issues are taken into account at every stage.
- 1.3 SEA is a required process by virtue of SEA Directive 42/2001¹. Article 3 requires that plans are the subject of an environmental assessment where they are likely to have significant effects on the environment. The process required in the UK is as prescribed in the SEA Regulations 2004 (SI 1633).
- 1.4 This document accompanies the Final Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

- 1.5 The Government has recently given Local Authorities new powers to help manage flood risk in a more coordinated way. The new responsibilities relate to local flood risk, namely from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourse (smaller rivers, streams and ditches), flood risk from all other rivers (known as main rivers) remains the responsibility of the Environment Agency.
- 1.6 The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Bracknell Forest aims to increase awareness of local flood risk issues. It sets out how partners are working together to reduce flood risk.
- 1.7 Bracknell Forest Borough is assessed at being at a low risk of flooding by the Environment Agency. Where flooding has been experienced, it has been of a short duration relation to intense rainfall. However, communities do not always distinguish between different types of flood risk; the impact is their key concern. We cannot guarantee to stop flooding. Extreme weather events appear to be on the increase, however, our intention is that the impact of flood incidents is as minimal as possible.
- 1.8 Bracknell Forest Council is considered to be a 'Lead Local Flood Authority' and therefore in order to ensure that local flood risk is appropriately considered and managed within the Borough has drawn up three overarching principles:-
 - Improve- To assess and improve the existing flood risk situation within Bracknell Forest Borough.
 - Maintain- Ensure that the existing water networks are maintained to minimise flood risk.
 - Prevent- Work towards preventing and mitigating future flood risk within the Borough.

¹ DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

- 1.9 In order to implement the Council's three overarching principles nine objectives have been developed. The following table (Table 1) sets out the nine objectives and which of the three overarching principles they contribute to.

Table 1- Compatibility

Objectives	Contributes to overarching principle
1. Seek to reduce the current flood risk and ensure that as the Lead Local Flood Authority we take effective measures to control risk in the future.	IMPROVE MAINTAIN PREVENT
2. Produce a local water management strategy in line with the national flood risk management guidance.	IMPROVE MAINTAIN PREVENT
3. Deliver the LLFA duties and responsibilities under the FWMA	IMPROVE MAINTAIN PREVENT
4. Understand and capture key hydrology data of the borough that might be a factor in the management of water so as to prevent and/or reduce the risk of flooding.	IMPROVE
5. Improve the level of understanding of flood risk, within the community as a whole as well as with key agencies ensuring understanding of roles and responsibilities and to adopt partnership working to deliver realistic outcomes.	IMPROVE
6. Ensure that due consideration is given to the wider environmental, social benefits and climate change requirements in both the strategy and delivery of objectives.	MAINTAIN
7. Seek to avoid an increase in flood risk as a result of new development by controlling how any additional water enters existing drainage systems.	PREVENT
8. As opportunities arise for grant funding consider whether and potential schemes may be on benefit	IMPROVE MAINTAIN PREVENT
9. Identify and deliver appropriate opportunities for training and education in flood risk management. Raise public awareness of flood risk issues.	IMPROVE MAINTAIN PREVENT

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.10 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required by European Union Directive (2001/42/EC) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. This Directive is often referred to as the "SEA Directive". The SEA makes provision for the screening of plans and strategies to determine the need for environmental assessment such that where significant negative environmental effects are likely an assessment is conducted and this can inform the means by which adverse impacts are avoided or minimised and the positive environmental effects are maximised.

- 1.11 Bracknell Forest considers that the scope of LFRMS is such that potential significant effects, which could be negative, may occur and has decided to undertake SEA. No screening determination has been undertaken in reaching this conclusion and the process of SEA formally commences with the production of the Scoping Report.
- 1.12 The scope of environmental factors listed in Annex I of the SEA Directive, however, indicates that a broad interpretation of what constitutes the environment is closely linked to social and economic factors:
- Biodiversity
 - Population
 - Human
 - Health
 - Fauna
 - Flora
 - Soil
 - Water
 - Air
 - Climatic factors
 - Material assets
 - Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage
 - Landscape
 - the interrelationship between the above factors
- 1.13 Given this guidance and the context of the LFRMS it is appropriate to use the Council's template for the sustainability appraisal of development planning documents as the point of reference to develop a framework of SEA Objectives. This is considered further in Section 3.

Consultation in the SEA Process

- 1.14 The SEA Regulations identify three organisations to act as statutory consultation authorities: the Environment Agency, Natural England (formerly English Nature and the Countryside Agency) and English Heritage.
- 1.15 Two consultation periods involving the statutory consultation authorities and, in the latter period, the public are set. The consultation periods relate to:
- **Scoping.** The responsible authority is required to send details of the plan or programme to each consultation authority so that they may form a view on the scope, level of detail and appropriate consultation period of the Environmental Report. The consultation authorities are required to give their views within five weeks.
 - **The Draft Environmental Report.** The responsible authority is required to invite the consultation authorities and the public to express their opinions on the draft Environmental Report and the plan or programme to which it relates.

Scoping Report Consultation

- 1.16 As indicated above, a Scoping Report consultation to establish the scope and methodology for the SEA and to provide the basis for consultation related to the range and level of detail of the Environmental Report was undertaken.
- 1.17 Appendix E summarises the main consultation comments received on the Scoping Report and indicates how these comments have been addressed in the preparation

of this Draft Environmental Report. Comments were received from the Environment Agency and Natural England.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

- 1.18 Appropriate Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) must be carried out under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC where an LFRMS is likely to have a significant impact on a site designated under European legislation, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites. Habitats Regulation Assessment is a parallel but separate exercise to SEA.
- 1.19 The LFRMS has been subject to an HRA Screening exercise of which the outcome is that there would be no significant effects and therefore no Appropriate Assessment would be required at this stage. This Screening Report is the subject of consultation with Natural England for their approval.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 Government guidance advocates a five-stage approach to undertaking SEA and this is outlined in Table 2, below. Assessment occurs in parallel with development of the plan in order that environmental impacts can be identified and alternatives identified that will avoid adverse impacts. Where impacts are unavoidable, appropriate measures to mitigate them can be incorporated early in policy development, offering a preventative solution.

Table 2- Stages of SEA

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and environmental objectives • A2: Collecting baseline information • A3: Identifying environmental issues and problems • A4: Developing the SEA framework • A5: Consulting on the scope of the SEA
Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B1: Testing the plan objectives against the SEA objectives • B2: Developing the strategic alternatives • B3: Predicting the effects of the draft plan • B4: Evaluating the effects of the draft plan • B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects • B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant environmental effects of plan implementation
Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C1: Preparing the Environmental Report
Stage D: Consulting on the draft Plan and Environmental Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1: Public participation on the Environmental Report and the draft LFRMS • D2: Assessing significant changes • D3: Making decisions and providing information
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing LFRMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring • E2: Responding to adverse effects

- 2.2 This Final Environmental Report represents Stage C & E shown in Table 2 above.

Draft Environmental Report Consultation

- 2.3 The Draft SEA was consulted on for a 6 week period between 4th June and 16th July 2013. The three statutory consultees were consulted and any comments received can be found in Appendix F.
- 2.4 The document was available on the Council's website for comment for the 6 week period highlighted above. However no further comments on top of those received by the Statutory consultees were received that were relevant to the Draft SEA report.
- 2.5 None of the comments received disputed or requested an amendment to the appraisal of the LFRMS. As such there are no suggested changes to the LFRMS prior to its adoption.

3. SEA stage A – Pre-production/Evidence Gathering

Task A1: Identifying other relevant plans, policies and programmes and sustainability objectives

Aim: Identify and review other relevant policies, plans, programmes, and sustainable development objectives that will affect or influence LFRMS.

Introduction

- 3.1 The first task of the SEA is the identification of other relevant plans, policies, programmes (PPPs) and environmental objectives. LFRMS must be prepared taking these into account as it may influence and be influenced by them. LFRMS can be influenced in many ways by other plans and programmes and by external sustainability objectives, such as those laid down in policies and legislation.
- 3.2 The SEA Directive specifically states that information should be provided on:
- “The relationship [of the plan or programme] with other relevant plans and programmes”
 - “The environmental protection objectives, established at international, [European] Community or [national] level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation”

Methodology

- 3.3 Both LFRMS and the SEA should be set in the context of international, national and local objectives along with strategic planning, transport, social, economic and environmental policies.
- 3.4 Relevant plans and programmes include those at different levels (international, national, regional, etc.) which influence the LFRMS, or those in other sectors which contribute, together with LFRMS, to changes in the environmental conditions of the area to which they apply. Relevant plans and programmes may include land use or spatial plans, plans dealing with aspects of the physical environment, and plans and programmes for specific sectors or types of activity.
- 3.5 Although all plans and programmes reviewed are deemed to be relevant to LFRMS, the following are considered to be of particular importance:
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2010).

- Landscape Analysis of Site Allocations and an assessment of Gaps/Green Wedges (Entec, June 2006).
- Accessibility Strategy 2006-11 (Integrated Transport Planning, March 2006).
- Core Strategy and Site Allocation Accessibility Analysis (Integrated Transport Planning, March 2006).
- Study of open space, sports, recreational and leisure facilities, PPG17 (BFC, October 2006).
- The Thames Basin Heaths SPA Technical Background Document to the Core Strategy DPD (BFC, June 2007).

- 3.6 Environmental protection objectives may be set by policies or legislation. Such policies and legislation may include European Directives, international undertakings, UK initiatives and national planning guidance.
- 3.7 For the preparation of the SEA of the LFRMS the review of the plans and programmes concentrated on plans and programmes and other relevant policy documents which were published after. This ensures that the SEA objectives developed for LFRMS generally adhere to, and are not in conflict with, objectives found in other more recent plans and programmes and policy documents.

Results of the Review

- 3.8 Appendix A sets out the relevant policies, plans and programmes (PPPs) reviewed. This cannot be considered an exhaustive list as other PPPs might arise as the SEA process progresses.
- 3.9 Environmental objectives and issues of relevance to the SEA and the preparation of LFRMS identified during the review were used to formulate a general, first set of environmental and social themes relevant to the SEA of the Bracknell Forest LFRMS.
- 3.10 Appendix B (baseline characteristics) presents in more detail how environmental and social sustainability themes have been derived from the PPP review and the implications of the identified themes for the LFRMS.

Task A2: Developing the baseline information

Aim: Collect relevant social, environmental and economic baseline information and produce a characterisation of the plan area.

Introduction

- 3.11 The next task in SEA covers the collation of baseline information. The review of other policies, plans and programmes undertaken previously provided a considerable amount of baseline information and this has been complemented by collation of data on key indicators relating to the SEA topic areas.
- 3.12 More specifically, the SEA Directive states that the Environmental Report should provide information on:
- “relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan” and the “environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be significantly affected” (Annex I (b) (c))
 - And;
 - “any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC (Birds Directive) and 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive)” (Annex I (c)).

Methodology

- 3.13 Information describing the baseline provides the basis for the prediction and monitoring of the effects of the implementation of LFRMS. It can be used as a way of identifying problems as they occur and the impact of any policy changes that may be made.
- 3.14 Due to the fact that SEA is an iterative process, subsequent stages in its preparation and assessment might identify other issues and priorities that require the sourcing of additional data and/or information and identification of monitoring strategies. This makes the SEA process flexible, adaptable and responsive to changes in the baseline conditions and enables trends to be analysed over time.
- 3.15 The most efficient way to collate relevant baseline data is in the form of indicators. This ensures that the data collation carried out is both focused and effective. The identification of relevant indicators has taken place alongside the assessment of other relevant plans, policies and programmes (Task A1), the identification of sustainability issues (Task A3), and developing the SEA framework (Task A4).
- 3.16 It should be noted that the SEA process does not require the collection of primary data, but relies on the analysis of existing information. As such, where data gaps exist, this is highlighted in the report.
- 3.17 Indicators have been selected for their ability to provide objective data that will, over time, offer an insight into general trends taking place. Throughout the assessment process, the following issues will need to be addressed:
- What is the current situation, including trends over time?
 - How far is the current situation from known thresholds, objectives or targets?
 - Are particularly sensitive or important elements of the environment, economy or society affected?
 - Are the problems of a large or small scale, reversible or irreversible, permanent or temporary, direct or indirect?
 - How difficult would it be to prevent, reduce or compensate for any negative effect?
 - Have there been, or will there be, any significant cumulative or synergistic effects over time?

Data Analysis

- 3.18 The baseline data provides an overview of the environmental and social characteristics of LFRMS area and how these compare to the region and the UK. This overview is presented in Appendix B. The analysis of the baseline data has highlighted a number of key issues in Bracknell Forest. These, together with implications and opportunities arising for LFRMS form part of Task A3 of the SEA process.
- 3.19 The Council will continually monitor and review data with a view to identifying problems that emerge in the future and taking action to resolve them. Appraisal will take this current and the likely future baseline position into account. The likely evolution of the baseline without LFRMS will be considered in assessment.

Data Limitations

- 3.20 Quantified information, or data, is used to help explain how things are changing over time. However, they do not necessarily overtly link cause and effect and are limited in how well they can explain why particular trends are occurring and the secondary effects of any changes. The data, therefore, acts as an indicator and has been selected to monitor progress towards the achievement of particular objectives

and provide a tangible, measure with respect to broader issues. This measure is, therefore, often only a small component of meeting the objective so may simplify the issues and interactions.

- 3.21 Appraisal relies, therefore, on a mixture of quantified information and professional judgement. Accordingly, the baseline includes a commentary with respect to the trend indicated by the current and historical data. It is a key objective of this consultation to gain consensus on which of the chosen indicators is the most representative of and relevant to monitoring significant environmental impacts.
- 3.22 Much of the data is collected or collated by external bodies and Bracknell Forest Council has little control over the temporal and spatial scope of the data collected and whether collection methods may change in the future. There are some gaps in the data collected as not all information is consistently available.

Task A3: Identifying sustainability issues

Aim: Identify key sustainability issues for the SEA to address.

Introduction

- 3.23 The next interlinked task in the SEA is the identification of key environmental issues. The requirement to identify issues arises from the SEA Directive, where the Environmental Report required under the Directive should include:
- “Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC” (Annex I(d))
- 3.24 The identification of environmental issues of particular significance in Bracknell Forest provides an opportunity to define key issues for LFRMS and to improve and refine objectives and options. The analysis of environmental issues influences the baseline and the SEA framework, in particular in identifying and selecting indicators and targets. This section describes the current situation and highlights the key issues faced within Bracknell Forest. It does not attempt to cover all the issues but identifies those that are considered to be a priority in terms of the environmental sustainability of the LFRMS area.

Methodology

- 3.25 The key sustainability issues for Bracknell Forest have been derived by analysing the baseline data and contextual information and objectives and issues from other plans, policies and programmes. The analysis of environmental issues is an ongoing and iterative process. As the SEA develops with further stakeholder involvement, the analysis of key issues is likely to evolve.

Results

- 3.26 A key role of the Scoping Report and the consultation exercise is to identify and agree the significant environmental issues within Bracknell Forest given the context of LFRMS. Drawing on the findings of the sustainability appraisal of the South East Plan, the Bracknell Forest Core Strategy DPD, the review of other documents (Appendix A) and the baseline (Appendix B) these are considered to be:
- Flood Risk
 - Recreational facilities
 - Protecting the landscape character of the Borough including historic environment.
 - Biodiversity, especially mitigating the impact upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

- Water quality.
- Climate Change.
- Soil Quality
- Infrastructure provision.

Task A4: Developing the sustainability appraisal framework

Aim: Develop the SEA framework, consisting of the environmental objectives, indicators and targets.

- 3.27 This SEA uses the SA Framework for the Local Development Framework as the starting point for developing a framework for the environmental assessment of LFRMS. This is because the SEA Directive requires a broad interpretation of the environment and in recognition of the close link between environmental assessment and sustainable development. The scope of the LFRMS is much narrower than the LDF, however, subsequently the SEA Framework does not include all the SA Objectives.
- 3.28 Table 3, below, comprises of a set of Social, Environmental and Economic objectives for Bracknell Forest. The purpose of these objectives is to state the direction and priorities of the SEA and give a structure to ensure a comprehensive and robust assessment.
- 3.29 Indicators have been identified for each of the SEA Objectives in the interests of monitoring progress towards delivering these. These are set out in Appendix B to provide a framework for the presentation of the environmental baseline.
- 3.30 The following table (Table 3) highlights in white those of the Council's 24 SEA Objectives that have been selected for appraisal work on the basis of the key sustainability issues identified in the evidence base, which the LFRMS can influence.
- 3.31 The table also confirms which of the selected SEA objectives are compatible with certain LFRMS Objectives (LFRMS Objectives are set out in Table 1).

Table 3- Selected SEA Objectives and likely compatibility with LFRMS Objectives

LDF SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Objective	LFRMS Objective
1	To meet local housing needs by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home	N/A
2	To reduce the risk of flooding and harm to people, property and the environment	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9
3	To protect and enhance human health and wellbeing	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.
4	To reduce poverty and social exclusion	N/A
5	To raise educational achievement levels	N/A
6	To reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime	N/A
7	To create and sustain vibrant and locally distinctive	N/A

LDF SA/SEA Objective	SA/SEA Objective	LFMS Objective
	communities	
8	To provide accessible essential services and facilities	N/A
9	To make opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation readily accessible	1, 3, 6, 7, 8
10	To encourage urban renaissance by improving efficiency in land use, design and layout. This includes making best use of previously developed land in meeting future development needs	N/A
11	To maintain air quality and improve where possible	N/A
12	To address the causes of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, and ensure Bracknell Forest is prepared for associated impacts	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 & 9
13	To conserve and enhance the Borough's biodiversity	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 & 9.
14	To protect and enhance where possible the Borough's characteristic countryside and its historic environment in urban and rural areas	1, 2, 3, 5, 6 & 7.
15	To improve travel choice and accessibility, reduce the need for travel by car and shorten the length and duration of journeys	N/A
16	To sustainably use and re-use renewable and non-renewable resources	N/A
17	To address the waste hierarchy by: minimising waste as a priority, reuse, then by recycling, composting or energy recovery	N/A
18	To maintain and improve water quality in the Borough's water courses and to achieve sustainable water resource management	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.
19	To maintain and improve soil quality	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 & 9.
20	To increase energy efficiency, and the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources in the Borough	N/A
21	To ensure high and stable levels of employment	N/A
22	To sustain economic growth and competitiveness of the Borough	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9.
23	To encourage smart economic growth	N/A
24	To develop and maintain a skilled workforce by developing the opportunities for everyone to acquire the skills needed to find work	N/A

Task A5: Consulting on the scope of SEA

Aim: Produce a Scoping Report and consult relevant authorities, the public and other key stakeholders on the scope of the appraisal and the key issues and possible options for solutions

3.32 A key component of the SEA process is consultation with stakeholders. The consultation throughout this period will be in accordance with Article 6 of the

European Union Directive 2001/42/EC and the Bracknell Forest Statement of Community Involvement.

- 3.33 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Regulation 12(6)) defines certain timescales for consulting the statutory bodies on a Scoping Report. This requires the responsible authority's give the consultation body a period of **5 weeks** from the date it receives the Scoping Report.

Statutory Consultation Body
Natural England
Environment Agency
English Heritage

- 3.34 Other appropriate consultees will be contacted at various stages throughout the assessment process. This consultation procedure is integrated into the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 3.35 This consultation seeks to:
- Ensure the SEA is comprehensive and robust enough to support the LFRMS during the later stages of full public consultation.
 - Advise on the appropriateness of the SEA objectives.
 - Advise on the appropriateness of the key environmental issues.
 - Advise on the comprehensiveness of the baseline data.
- 3.36 The Scoping Report was consulted on for 5 weeks from 14th February – 21st March 2013. The resulting comments have been summarised and subsequently considered in a table set out in Appendix E.
- 3.37 The majority of the changes consisted of updates to plans and programmes and baseline data. However one main change is that SEA Objective 12- Climate Change has now been included as one of the appraisal criteria as suggested by Natural England. Both Appendix A and Appendix B have been updated where necessary following feedback on the Scoping Report.

4. SEA Stage B- Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects

- 4.1 The SEA Directive requires that the Environmental Report should:
- consider 'reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme'; and,
 - give 'an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with' (Article 5.1 and Annex Ih).
- 4.2 Following the initial compatibility assessment between the LFRMS objectives and the SEA objectives outlined in the previous section, this section develops, refines and assesses strategic alternatives, as part of Stage B of the SEA process.

Task B2: Developing Strategic Alternatives

- 4.3 In order to adequately assess strategic alternatives two options were put forward:-
- **Option 1-** No LFRMS
 - **Option 2-** Provision of a LFRMS
- 4.4 These two alternative options were appraised against the 8 SEA Objectives considered relevant to the appraisal of the LFRMS. The results of the appraisal can be found in Appendix C- Assessment of Strategic Alternatives.

Alternatives Assessment Summary

- 4.5 Having appraised both Option 1 (No LFRMS) and Option 2 (Provision of LFRMS), Appendix C (Assessment of Strategic Alternatives) shows that overall it is likely that the provision of the LFRMS would have a positive affect when appraised against the selected SEA objectives.

Recommendations

- 4.6 The recommendation was to take Option 2 (Provision of LFRMS) forward for individual LFRMS Objective led appraisal work and associated consultation.

Task B3/4: Predicting and Evaluating the Effects of the LFRMS

Introduction

- 4.7 The consultation version of the LFRMS contains nine objectives which follow the three overarching principles for flood risk management in Bracknell Forest. The actions and measures later set out in the LFRMS seek to support these objectives.

Appraisal of Strategy Objectives

The 9 LFRMS Objectives:-

- 1) Seek to reduce the current flood risk and ensure that as the Lead Local Flood Authority we take effective measures to control risk in the future.
- 2) Produce a local water management strategy in line with the national flood risk management guidance.
- 3) Deliver the LLFA duties and responsibilities under the FWMA
- 4) Understand and capture key hydrology data of the borough that might be a factor in the management of water so as to prevent and/or reduce the risk of flooding.
- 5) Improve the level of understanding of flood risk, within the community as a whole as well as with key agencies ensuring understanding of roles and responsibilities and to adopt partnership working to deliver realistic outcomes.
- 6) Ensure that due consideration is given to the wider environmental, social benefits and climate change requirements in both the strategy and delivery of objectives.
- 7) Seek to avoid an increase in flood risk as a result of new development by controlling how any additional water enters existing drainage systems.
- 8) As opportunities arise for grant funding consider whether and potential schemes may be on benefit
- 9) Identify and deliver appropriate opportunities for training and education in flood risk management. Raise public awareness of flood risk issues.

4.8 As already discussed in Section 3 on Methodology and data limitations, the assessment undertaken relies heavily on professional judgement, which necessarily infers an element of subjectivity. It also relies on certain assumptions about the changes to people's behaviour as a result of the measures being assessed and the way development will be implemented.

4.9 In order to highlight any significant effects of the LFRMS each individual LFRMS Objective and its associated measures/action were assessed against each of the 9 selected SEA objectives.

Assessment Results

4.10 The detailed assessment of the nine Objectives against the nine SEA Objectives is shown in Appendix D and Table 4 shows a summary of the significance of effects of each objective against the SEA Objectives.

4.11 Below a summary of the assessment made to each objective is presented and general recommendations to further improve the strategy are proposed where necessary.

Overall findings

4.12 For the purpose of summarising the findings only the moderate and major impacts have been referred to.

Objective 1

4.13 Providing an objective to reduce current flood risk and ensure that it does not increase in the future has a positive impact upon all 9 of the SEA Objectives. However, this LFRMS objective has a significant positive impact upon SEA Objectives 1 (Flood Risk) and 7 (Maintain and Improve Water Quality). No adverse environmental effects were predicted.

Objective 2

4.14 Delivering a local flood risk management strategy in line with national guidance has a positive impact upon all 9 of the SEA Objectives. However, this LFRMS objective has a significant positive impact upon SEA Objectives 1 (Flood Risk) and 7 (Maintain and Improve Water Quality). LFRMS Objective 1 would allow for both current and future flood risk to be addressed as well as potentially improving on current water quality. No adverse environmental effects were predicted.

Objective 3

4.15 Delivering the Local Lead Flood Authorities duties and responsibilities has a positive impact upon all 9 of the SEA Objectives. However this LFRMS objective has a significant positive impact upon SEA Objectives 1 (Flood Risk) and 7 (Maintain and Improve Water Quality). LFRMS Objective 1 would allow for both current and future flood risk to be addressed as well as potentially improving on current water quality. No adverse environmental effects were predicted.

Objective 4

4.16 Understanding and capturing up to date local hydrology data allows effects to be better predicted and appropriate mitigation to be applied. This objective has a positive impact upon all 9 of the SEA Objectives with the outcome likely to be significantly positive against SEA Objectives 1 (Flood Risk) and 7 (Maintain and Improve Water Quality) No adverse environmental effects were predicted.

Objective 5

4.17 Improving the understanding of flood risk within the community and adopting partnership working has a positive effect upon all 9 SEA Objectives and in particular Objective 1 (Flood Risk). No adverse environmental effects were predicted.

Objective 6

4.18 Giving consideration to the wider environment, for example multifunctional spaces that can be flood plains and both biodiversity and recreational resources, has a positive impact upon all 9 SEA Objectives in particular a positive influence upon SEA Objectives 3 (Recreation) and 5 (Biodiversity). No adverse environmental effects were predicted.

Objective 7

4.19 Seeking to avoid an increase in flood risk as a result of new development is likely to result in a positive influence upon almost all the SEA Objectives. No adverse environmental effects were predicted.

Objective 8

4.20 Identifying areas of flood risk and potential mitigation measures is likely to result in a positive influence upon all 9 of the SEA objectives. No adverse environmental effects were predicted.

Objective 9

4.21 Seeking opportunities to educate and engage with people is likely to result in a positive influence upon all 9 SEA objectives. No adverse environmental effects were predicted.

Table 4- Assessment Summary Table

SA Objective	SEA Objectives	LFRMS Objective 1	LFRMS Objective 2	LFRMS Objective 3	LFRMS Objective 4	LFRMS Objective 5	LFRMS Objective 6	LFRMS Objective 7	LFRMS Objective 8	LFRMS Objective 9
1	To reduce the risk of flooding and harm to people, property and the environment	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++
2	To protect and enhance human health and wellbeing	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
3	To make opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation readily accessible	+	+	+	+	+	++	0	+	+
4	To address the causes of climate change through reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, and ensure Bracknell Forest is prepared for associated impacts.	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	+
5	To conserve and enhance the Borough's biodiversity	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	+
6	To protect and enhance where possible the Borough's characteristic countryside and its historic environment in urban and rural areas	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
7	To maintain and improve water quality in the Borough's water courses and to achieve sustainable water resource management	++	++	++	++	+	++	+	++	++
8	To maintain and improve soil quality	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
9	To sustain economic growth and competitiveness of the Borough	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

5.0 SEA Stage B- Recommendations for Improvements to LFRMS Strategy

General Recommendations

- 5.1 As it stands the LFRMS objectives lack detail setting out what the individual objective led projects will consist of. Although the overall LFRMS scored positively against the SEA objectives it is likely that further project specific SEA screening will be required and where necessary further appraisal work may need to be carried out as required by European Union Directive (2001/42/EC).

6.0 SEA Stage E- Monitoring the significant effects of implementing LFRMS

Introduction

- 6.1 The term mitigation encompasses any approach which is aimed at preventing, reducing or offsetting significant adverse environmental effects that have been identified. In practice, a range of measures applying one or more of these approaches is likely to be considered in mitigating any significant adverse effects predicted as a result of implementing LFRMS. In addition, it is also important to consider measures aimed at enhancing positive effects. All such measures are generally referred to as mitigation measures.
- 6.2 However, the emphasis should be in the first instance on proactive avoidance of adverse effects. Only once alternative options or approaches to avoiding an effect have been examined should mitigation then examine ways of reducing the scale/importance of the effect.
- 6.3 Mitigation can take a wide range of forms, including:
- Refining options in order to improve the likelihood of positive effects and to minimise adverse effects;
 - Technical measures (such as setting guidelines) to be applied during the implementation stage;
 - Identifying issues to be addressed in project environmental impact assessments for certain projects or types of projects;
 - Proposals for changing other plans and programmes; and
 - Contingency arrangements for dealing with possible adverse effects.

Mitigation of significant environmental effects

- 6.4 As no significant adverse effects were predicted as a result of the SEA no mitigation measures were considered to be required to address adverse effects. 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.

Monitoring Programme

- 6.5 The SEA Directive states that 'member states shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes.....in order, inter alia, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action' (Article 10.1). In addition, the Environmental Report should provide

information on a 'description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring' (Annex I (i)) (Stage E).

- 6.6 SEA monitoring will cover significant social and environmental effects and it involves measuring indicators which will enable the establishment of a causal link between the implementation of the plan and the likely significant effects (both positive and negative) being monitored. In line with the SEA Directive, these significant positive and negative effects should be monitored with the implementation of LFRMS.
- 6.7 The monitoring system must be clear, practical and cost-effective. The proposed monitoring framework has been derived from the indicators and targets that were developed for the SEA, along with other findings from the SEA process, i.e. focusing upon the key significant environmental considerations. These indicators were initially put forward in the Scoping Report then amended following consultation responses; they were taken from existing sources of indicators in order to ensure recording of data for the indicator is already established.
- 6.8 Monitoring, review and updating will be essential to ensure it remains fit for purpose and as a way of demonstrating success in delivering reduced flood risk within the Borough.
- 6.9 The Bracknell Forest Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, which is the key evidence base for the strategy will be reviewed in 2016. The review will ensure the contents are compatible with current legislation as well as a report showing progress against the set objectives.
- 6.10 Indicators listed in Appendix B of this report (Baseline data, characterisation, indicators and trends) provide a basis for monitoring the significant sustainability effects of any of the LFRMS objectives.
- 6.11 More work may be required when it is clear what the content of the Objective led projects are.

7.0 Relevant References

European Commission (2001) Directive 2001/42/EC "on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment".

ODPM (2005) A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

Environmental Assessments of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Statutory Instrument 2004 no.1633).

Notes

The Appendices for this Draft Environmental Report are a separate document.

Appendix A: Review of Policies, Plans and Programmes is contained in a separate document.

Appendix B: Baseline Data and Indicators is contained in a separate document.

Appendix C: Assessment of Strategic Alternatives.

Appendix D: Assessment of LFRMS Objectives and Associated Actions.

Appendix E: Scoping Consultation Comments and Responses.

Appendix F: Draft Consultation Comments.