



# **Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan**

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

**August 2016**

## Contents

	Page
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Scope of the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan	4
3.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening	4
4.0 Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening	11
5.0 Conclusions	19
Appendix A Plan 1: SAC, SPA and SPA Buffers	21
Appendix B Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area: Conservation Objectives, Qualifying Features and Ecological Indicators	22
Appendix C Characteristics and Description of the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC	23
Appendix D Consultation Response from Natural England	25
Appendix E Consultation Response from Historic England	27
Appendix F Consultation Response from the Environment Agency	30
Appendix G Consultation Statement	33

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This statement sets out the Council's determination under Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 on whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required for the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan (WNP). This statement also sets out the Council's determination as to whether Appropriate Assessment is required under Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).

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

- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (Regulation 9(1)), the 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***

- 1.5 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required to determine whether a plan or project would have significant adverse effects upon the integrity of internationally designated sites of nature conservation importance, or Natura 2000 sites. The need for HRA is set out within the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EC and transposed into British Law by Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) as amended, the 'Habitats Regulations'. In accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Regulation 102 of the Habitats Regulations, the Borough Council must determine if a plan requires Appropriate Assessment. Section 4 of this report deals with the need for Habitats Regulation Assessment.

## **2.0 Scope of the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan**

- 2.1 Bracknell Forest Council designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of Winkfield Parish in December 2015. The Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) is being prepared by the community through the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
- 2.2 This screening is based on the SEA and HRA Screening Opinion request letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and the accompanying WNP Framework and Visioning Workshop Note, dated May 2016. At this time the proposed scope includes policies relating to:
  - Settlement boundaries
  - Important local gaps and key views
  - Allocation, reservation or safeguarding of specific sites for uses such as local needs housing, community infrastructure, employment and other uses\*
  - New housing types and tenures
  - Rural exception housing
  - Detailed design
  - Green infrastructure assets, including Local Green Spaces
  - Support for community facilities
  - Protection of local heritage assets
  - Car parking
  - Traffic calming, support for walking and cycling

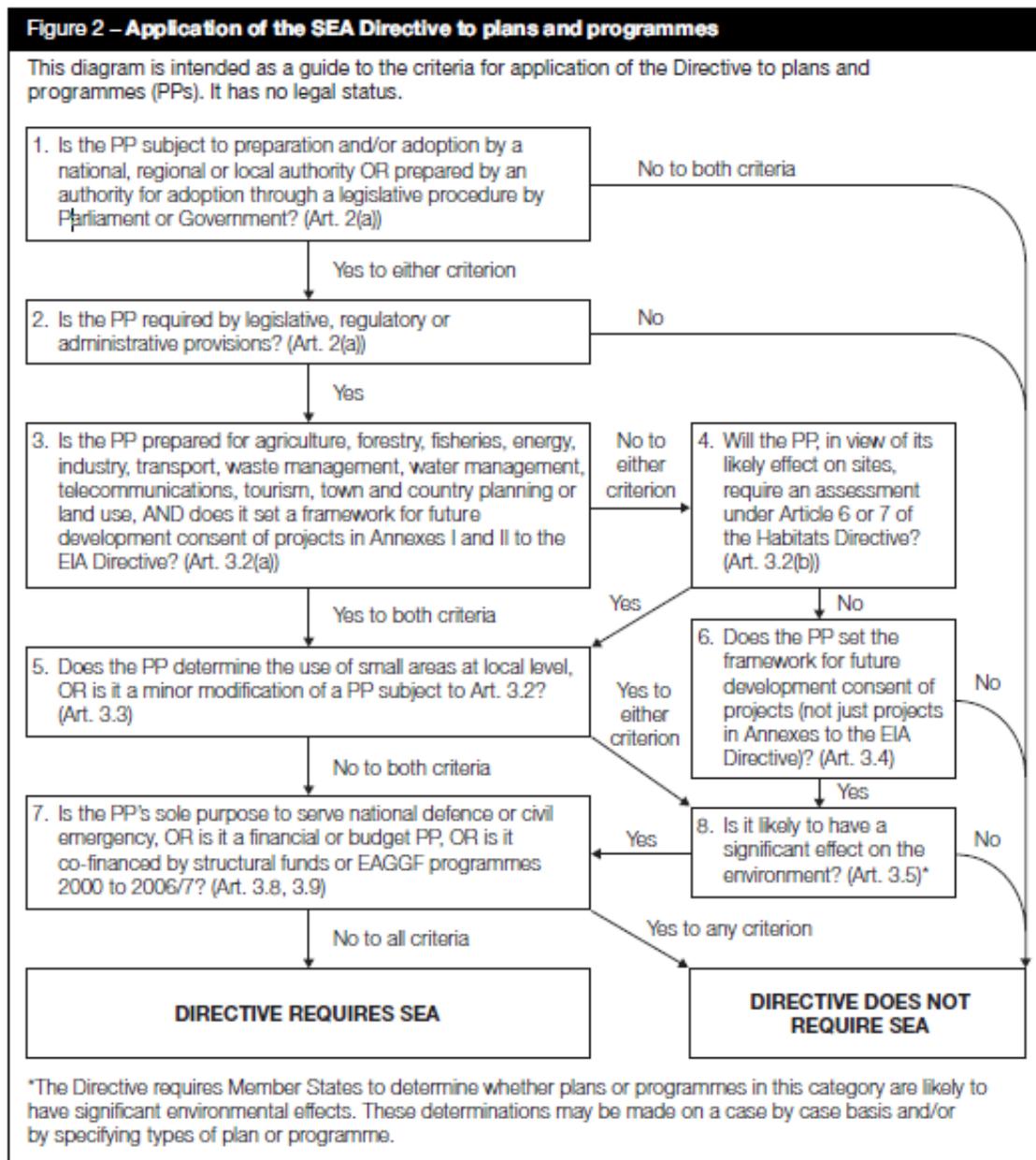
\*The screening opinion request states that the WNP is 'likely' to allocate sites for development.

## **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 This draft document is subject to consultation between 27 May 2016 to 8 June 2016 with the relevant bodies. Their comments will be included in a final version of this document, in which the Council will 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 WNP 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**

Stage	Y/N	Reasoning
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 WNP area, including infrastructure development which may fall under no. 10 of Annex II of the EIA Directive as 'urban development' (for example, housing, community infrastructure or employment).
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))	Y?	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	N	NDP does not deal with these issues.

Stage	Y/N	Reasoning
budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art. 3.8. 3.9)		
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art.3.5)	Y?	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 WNP 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 Winkfield Parish Council at the current stage of preparation (see Section 2 for the broad scope of the WNP 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.	Yes	The WNP sets out a local policy framework for development proposals and is likely to allocate sites for development which have not been previously allocated in the adopted Core Strategy and Site Allocations Local Plan. As such they have not already been subject to SEA. The location, nature and size of site allocations are currently unknown.
1b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	Yes/No	The WNP 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. In preparing future plans, the Council should take account of the WNP; the WNP should not significantly influence other plans

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
		and programmes, but may have a degree of influence over the formation of future strategic policies.
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 WNP contributes, as required, to the achievement of sustainable development as set out in the higher level Development Plan. Policies set out in the WNP are planned to have a positive impact on local environmental assets (for example green infrastructure assets and the protection of local heritage assets). The likelihood of significant effects on the environment is therefore reduced.
1d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme:	Yes	<p>The WNP seeks to minimise existing environmental problems in the area. However, the Plan is likely to allocate sites or propose development that may give rise to environmental problems. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the area includes designated Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (some of these areas across the Bracknell borough are in unfavourable recovering condition)</li> <li>• a small portion of the Downshire Way and Bagshot Road Air Quality Management Area lies on the parish boundary</li> </ul>
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 WNP is not directly relevant to the implementation of Community legislation and 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.	Yes/No	Policies seek to protect and improve the environment. It is unlikely that there will be any irreversible damaging

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
		environmental impacts associated with the WNP; however the allocation of sites will cause long term change in land use. The significance of the effects will depend on the scale, nature and location of the allocations.
2b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	The cumulative effects of policies within the WNP are unlikely to result in negative effects; they are more likely to have a positive impact (for example, by supporting walking and cycling).
2c) the transboundary nature of the effects	No	The extent of any effects is thought to be largely within the parish boundary, with the possible exception of the effect on the SPA and SAC (see HRA screening below for further consideration of this).
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 emerging policies in the WNP.
2e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No	The WNP is concerned with development within Winkfield Parish which has a population of circa 15,000 and covers an area of 3888 hectares (15 sq. miles). The extent of any effects is thought to be largely within the parish boundary, with the possible exception of the effect on the SPA and SAC (see HRA screening below for further consideration of this).
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; or iii) intensive land-use.	Yes	The Neighbourhood Area contains one SPA, one SAC, four Sites of Special Scientific Interest and one Proposed Local Wildlife Site. There are a number of listed buildings within the Neighbourhood Area and two Conservation Areas have been designated. The majority of waterbodies in the Bracknell borough require improvement to meet 'good' ecological and chemical classifications by 2027. The central part of the

Schedule 1 Criteria	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Comments
		<p>Neighbourhood Area is affected by flood zones 3 and 2. The Neighbourhood Area is located within groundwater Source Protection Zone 3 (SPZ3).</p> <p>Until specific locations for housing, community infrastructure and employment are known, it is not possible to thoroughly assess the effect they may have on natural characteristics, cultural heritage and environmental quality standards. Any site allocations are expected to make the best and most efficient use of land, not to intensively use the land for development. Other policies within the WNP should mitigate against the over-development of land.</p> <p>Having regard to the scope of the Plan, the WNP is not expected to exceed environmental quality standards or limits, but might.</p>
2g) the effects on areas of landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	No	<p>It is considered likely that the policies to establish settlement boundaries and to define important local gaps will result in the WNP not adversely affect areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status. However further appraisal of policies will be required to confirm this.</p>

### Screening Outcome

3.8 Having reviewed the criteria, the Council has concluded that there is the potential for the emerging WNP to have a significant environmental effect and accordingly will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The main reasons for this conclusion are:

- The WNP is likely to allocate sites for one or more uses such as local needs housing, community infrastructure, employment and other uses. The location, nature and size of these allocations are currently unknown; as such the environmental effects of the WNP will require assessment when more information is available (e.g. its effect on environmental problems and on

valuable and vulnerable aspects of the built, natural and historic environment).

3.9 The environmental effects of the WNP are likely to be minimised because:

- The WNP 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 WNP must support and uphold the general principle of strategic policies in the Development Plan for Bracknell Forest, and therefore has limited influence on other plans or programmes; and
- The WNP seeks to avoid or minimise environmental effects through guidance on issues which should be considered when determining development proposals within the Neighbourhood Area. The WNP (or parts of it) may therefore have a positive environmental effect.

3.10 As this Screening Opinion concludes that SEA is required, the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will be required to prepare a SEA. It is important to remember that this screening opinion is a 'snapshot in time' and that if the issues addressed in the WNP should change, then a new screening process may be required.

#### **4.0 Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening**

4.1 The Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) refers to the assessment required for any plan or project to assess the potential implications for European wildlife sites. The HRA therefore looks at whether the implementation of the plan or project would harm the habitats or species for which European wildlife sites are designated. European wildlife sites relevant to the WNP are:

- Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

4.2 In addition to SPAs and SACs, Ramsar sites are designated under the Ramsar Convention. Although they are not covered by the Habitats Regulations, as a matter of Government policy, Ramsar sites should be treated in the same way as European wildlife sites. European wildlife sites and Ramsar sites are collectively known as internationally designated wildlife sites.

4.3 The legislation sets out a process to assess the potential implications of a plan on internationally designated sites. The first stage of this process is a 'screening' exercise where the details of nearby internationally designated sites are assessed to see if there is the potential for the implementation of the Plan to have an impact on the site.

4.4 The WNP once adopted will form part of the Development Plan for Bracknell Forest, and will be in conformity with the strategic policies in adopted Local Plans for the Borough. The Core Strategy and Site Allocations Local Plan have

been subject to both Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment<sup>1</sup>.

- 4.5 During 2006 - 2007, Bracknell Forest Council undertook a Habitats Regulations Screening Exercise<sup>2</sup> to examine the likely effects of the Core Strategy and the (former) Site Allocations DPDs on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and the Windsor Forest and Great Park Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The screening opinion concluded that:
- The DPDs were likely to have a significant effect on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.
  - No significant effect was identified on the integrity of the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC as none of the policies proposed development within 2km of the SAC boundary.
  - No significant effect was identified on the integrity of any other Natura 2000 sites.
- 4.6 The WNP is likely to allocate sites and provide general policies to guide the impact of development, so a high level screening assessment has been undertaken. As parts of the SPA and the SAC are located in the WNP area, a HRA Screening is deemed necessary, focusing on the effects of the WNP on the integrity of both the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC.

### ***Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area***

- 4.7 The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA) was designated in March 2005 for its lowland heathland, supporting significant populations of three ground-nesting birds (Nightjar, Woodlark and Dartford Warbler). The regulations covering this designation require that any plan or proposal should have regard to whether it will adversely affect the integrity of the Special Protection Area (SPA). The two areas of the SPA that lie within Bracknell Forest are the Broadmoor to Bagshot Heaths SSSI and the Sandhurst to Owlsmoor Bogs and Heaths (also known as Wildmoor Heath) SSSI.
- 4.8 Part of the TBHSPA lies within the boundary of the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan area. Residential development within three buffer zones around the SPA is considered to have the potential to affect the integrity of the SPA. The location of the SPA and its associated buffers are illustrated in the map in Appendix A. In summary:
- TBHSPA covers in the region of 2 km<sup>2</sup> of the southern extent of the parish.
  - Adjacent to the TBHSPA boundary is a 400m buffer zone. Within this area there is a general presumption against any net increase in residential development.
  - Almost half the parish lies between 400m - 5km of the TBHSPA. Within this buffer zone any net increase in residential development is considered to have

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/developmentplan>

<sup>2</sup> See Thames Basin Heaths SPA Technical Background Document to the Core Strategy DPD (June 2007).

the potential to affect the integrity of the SPA, through for example, potential additional recreational pressure.

- About one quarter of the parish lies 5 – 7km from the TBHSPA within which residential developments over 50 net dwellings are also considered to have a potential impact.

- 4.9 Any residential development within the 400m straight line distance of the boundary for the SPA will require assessment on its own merits with regard to the Habitat Directive. If a significant impact cannot be precluded, a detailed project-level Appropriate Assessment must ensure no adverse effect. Within this zone a significant adverse effect can only be avoided or mitigated in exceptional circumstances, therefore there is a general presumption against a net increase in residential development within 400m of the SPA boundary.
- 4.10 Any residential development proposals which come forward within the 400m to 7km catchment will be subject to the retained Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan and Policy CS14 of the Bracknell Forest Core Strategy<sup>3</sup> which requires any residential development likely to have a significant effect on the purpose and integrity of the SPA to demonstrate that adequate mitigation measures are put in place to avoid any potential adverse effects. These measures require the provision of (or contribution towards) Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and contributions towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Measures (SAMM) as set out in more detail in the Council’s Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance and Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document.<sup>4</sup> The level of mitigation required in this zone is likely to be lower than in the 400m – 5km SPA buffer zone.
- 4.11 Allocations for employment development will be considered on case by case basis.
- 4.12 Appendix B sets out the Conservation Objectives of the TBHSPA. Having regard to these and the potential effects, Table 3 below sets out a HRA Screening for the emerging WNP:

**Table 3: Screening of Emerging Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan Policies for the TBHSPA**

<b>WNP emerging Policy/issue</b>	<b>Detail of Policy/issue to be screened</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Significant effect likely?</b>
Establish settlement boundaries	To provide for and contain growth of Chavey Down, North Ascot and Winkfield Row	The policy may lead to development	May lead to significant effect
Define important local gaps and key views		The policy itself will not lead to development but seeks to protect important local gaps and key views	No significant effect
Allocation, reservation or	Location, nature and size of allocations are	The policy will lead to development	Significant effect likely

<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/core-strategy-development-plan-document-february-2008.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Available at <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/thamesbasinheathsspecialprotectionarea>

<b>WNP emerging Policy/issue</b>	<b>Detail of Policy/issue to be screened</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Significant effect likely?</b>
safeguarding of specific sites for uses such as local needs housing, community infrastructure, employment and other uses	currently unknown		
New housing types and tenures	Aims to achieve a balanced housing stock for each village	The policy itself will not lead to development but to define the housing types and tenures	No significant effect
Rural housing exception	Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity	The policy may lead to development, the location and size of which are currently unknown	May lead to significant effect
Detailed design	Policies for detailed design of each village	The policy itself will not lead to development but sets out design criteria	No significant effect
Green infrastructure assets, including Local Green Spaces	Policy defining network of green infrastructure assets, including improvement/creation of footpaths/cycleways, designation of Local green Spaces and connections with adjacent parishes	The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect and enhance local green infrastructure, including Local Green Spaces.	No significant effect
Support for community facilities	Policy defining existing community facilities for protection and improvements and extensions	The policy supports the improvement of local infrastructure	No significant effect
Protection of important local heritage assets		The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect local heritage assets	No significant effect
Car parking	Policy establishing car parking standards for new developments	The policy will not lead to development	No significant effect
Traffic calming, support for walking and cycling	Policy(s) defining opportunities for traffic calming and support for walking and cycling to facilities and services	The policy itself will not lead to development but supports improvement of local infrastructure	No significant effect

### ***Windsor Forest and Great Park Special Area of Conservation***

4.13 The Windsor Forest and Great Park Special Area of Conservation (SAC) was designated in April 2005 for its old acidophilous oak woods with *Quercus robur* on sandy plains and the Violet click beetle (*Limoniscus violaceus*). The location

of the SAC is shown in Appendix A; its characteristics and a description are provided in Appendix C. The regulations covering this designation require that any plan or proposal should have regard to whether it will adversely affect the integrity of the SAC. The area of the SAC that lies within the WNP area is also designated as Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI.

4.14 The identification of potential effects must include:

- Direct effects upon the species or habitat for which the site is designated.
- Indirect effects which could impact on parts of the sites quite remote from the application area, for example through changes to water quantity or quality.
- In-combination effects such as incremental damage to European sites as a result of cumulative plans, the effects of which individually are inconsequential, but when combined, do amount to a level of damage that threatens the integrity of the sites.

4.15 The Natura 2000 Standard Data Form for the SAC (dated 25 January 2016)<sup>5</sup> identifies the potential threats, pressures and activities 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)

4.16 A screening of the emerging WNP for the potential significant effects on the integrity of the Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC is provided in Table 4.

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<sup>5</sup> Available at <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/n2kforms/UK0012586.pdf>

**Table 4: Screening of Emerging Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan Policies for the SAC**

<b>WNP emerging Policy/issue</b>	<b>Detail of Policy/issue to be screened</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Significant effect likely to air quality?</b>	<b>Significant effect likely to invasive non-native species?</b>	<b>Significant effect likely to forest and Plantation management and use?</b>	<b>Significant effect likely to interspecific floral relations?</b>
Establish settlement boundaries	To provide for and contain growth of Chavey Down, North Ascot and Winkfield Row	The policy may lead to development. Significance of any effect will depend on the nature, scale and location of boundaries relative to the SAC.	May lead to significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect
Define important local gaps and key views		The policy itself will not lead to development but seeks to protect important local gaps and key views	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect
Allocation, reservation or safeguarding of specific sites for uses such as local needs housing, community infrastructure, employment and other uses	Location, nature and size of allocations are currently unknown	The policy will lead to development. Significance of any effect will depend on the nature, scale and location of allocations relative to the SAC.	May lead to significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect

New housing types and tenures	Aims to achieve a balanced housing stock for each village	The policy itself will not lead to development but to define the housing types and tenures	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect
Rural housing exception	Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity	The policy may lead to development, the location and size of which are currently unknown. Significance of any effect will depend on the nature, scale and location relative to the SAC.	May lead to significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect
Detailed design	Policies for detailed design of each village	The policy itself will not lead to development but sets out design criteria	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect
Green infrastructure assets, including Local Green Spaces	Policy defining network of green infrastructure assets, including improvement/creation of footpaths/cycleways, designation of Local green Spaces and connections with adjacent parishes	The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect and enhance local green infrastructure, including Local Green Spaces.	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect

Support for community facilities	Policy defining existing community facilities for protection and improvements and extensions	The policy supports the improvement of local infrastructure	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect
Protection of important local heritage assets		The policy will not lead to development but seeks to protect local heritage assets	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect
Car parking	Policy establishing car parking standards for new developments	The policy will not lead to development	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect
Traffic calming, support for walking and cycling	Policy(s) defining opportunities for traffic calming and support for walking and cycling to facilities and services	The policy itself will not lead to development but supports improvement of local infrastructure	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect	No significant effect

### ***In Combination Effects***

- 4.17 Existing plans and proposals must be considered when assessing new plans or programmes for likely significant effects as they may create 'in combination' effects. As the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan is proposing to allocate sites and contains policies which would lead to development, it is concluded that significant in-combination likely effects will occur due to its implementation.
- 4.18 As set out below, it is concluded as a result of the above, that the WNP could lead to a significant effect on the integrity of the SPA and the SAC therefore does requires a HRA 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 Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan may have significant effects in relation to some of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, and therefore does need to be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

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

- 5.2 The screening assessment concludes that 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 WNP. As such the WNP does require a HRA to be undertaken. The Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will be responsible for providing the Council with information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment (as required under Regulation 61(2) of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010).
- 5.3 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 and Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy relating to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

### ***Consultation Responses***

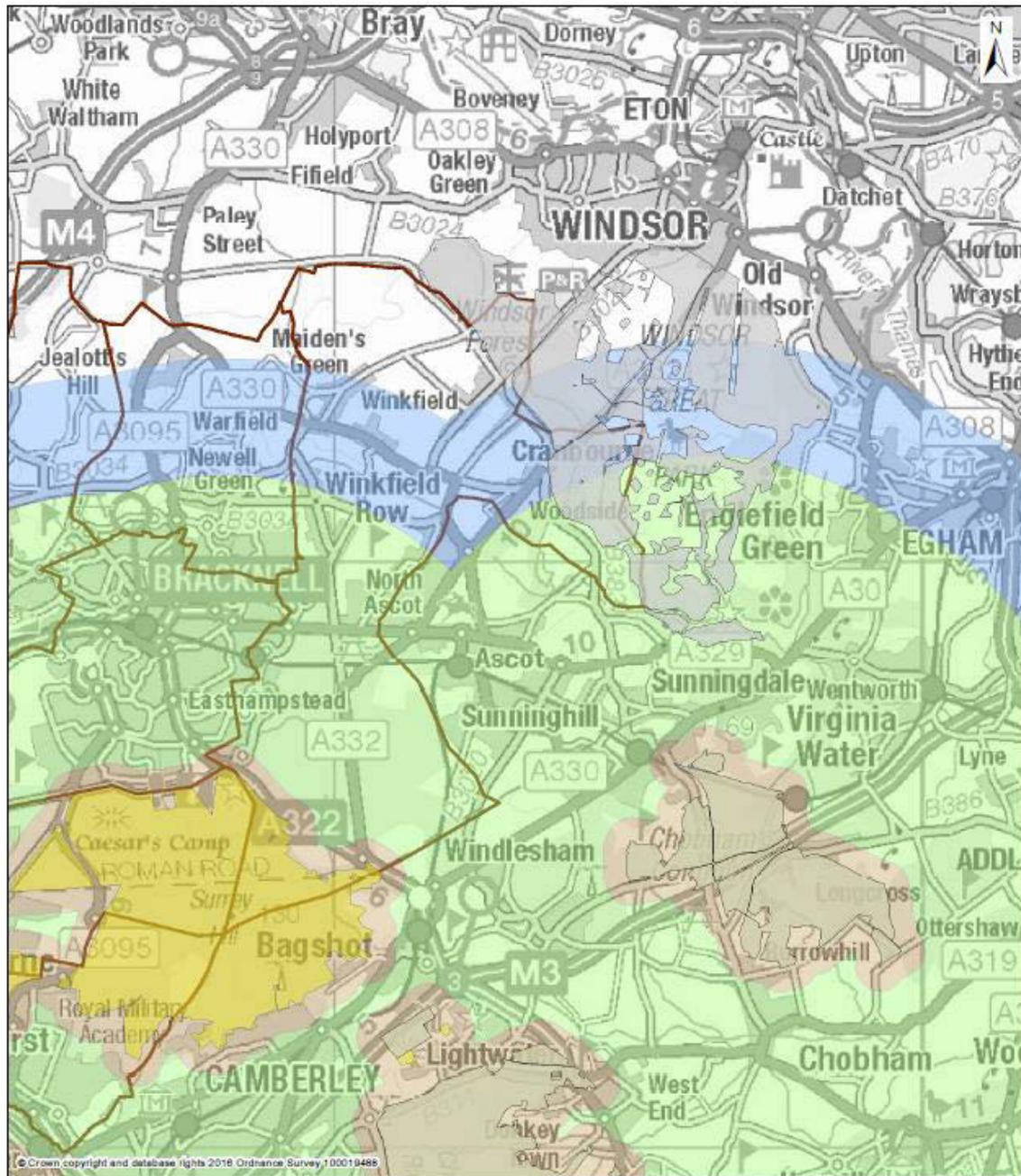
- 5.4 From 27 May 16 to 8 July 2016 a consultation was undertaken on this screening report with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. Consultation responses were received from all three bodies and these are shown in Appendices D, E and F. All three consultation bodies agreed with BFC's conclusions. A Consultation Statement is included in Appendix G showing how the responses have been considered and taken into account.
- 5.5 Natural England comment, that with further information, it could be possible to screen out the effect on the Neighbourhood Plan on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA in the following way:

- *If the neighbourhood plan does not allocate any housing, then it would be very easy to screen effects out*
- *If the neighbourhood plan does allocate housing, and does adhere to the Bracknell Local Plan Policy on Thames Basin Heaths, CS14, and identifies a potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG solution), then equally it will be easy to screen effects out*
- *If the neighbourhood plan does allocate housing, and doesn't include SANG or reference to CS14 then a full Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required*

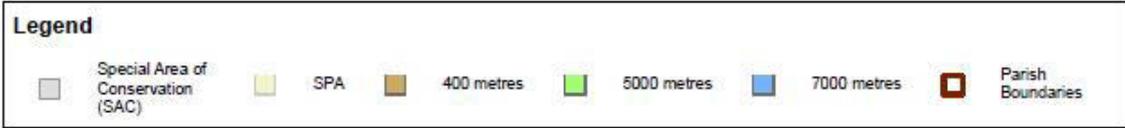
5.6 The consultees also provided some further advice and information which, whilst not affecting the outcome of the Screening Determination, provide valuable contribution. They are summarised here to aid taking them forward:

- Reference should be made to the Historic Environment Record at the Scoping Stage.
- The sequential test should be applied for site allocations or any proposed development for local plans as set out in paragraph 100 of the NPPF which states 'Local Plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid where possible flood risk...'.
- Reference should be made to the leaflet 'Planning for the environment at the neighbourhood level' which is produced by the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Forestry Commission and Natural England.

**APPENDIX A - Plan 1: SAC, SPA and SPA Buffers**



SAC, SPA and SPA Buffers Date: 20/05/2016  
Scale: 1:87,336 (when printed on A4)



© Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 100019488 (Map not to scale).

## APPENDIX B - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area: Conservation Objectives, Qualifying Features and Ecological Indicators

Conservation Objectives	Qualifying Features	Indicators
<p>Avoid the deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying features and the significant disturbance of the qualifying features, ensuring the integrity of the site is maintained and the site makes a full contribution to achieving the aims of the Birds Directive.</p> <p>Subject to natural change, to maintain or restore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features;</li> <li>• The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features;</li> <li>• The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely;</li> <li>• The populations of the qualifying features;</li> <li>• The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.</li> <li>• Biodiversity Strategy 2020: Meet or support Biodiversity 2020 actions for SPA habitats and species present on SPA areas that were part of the reason for its designation as an internationally important site.</li> </ul>	<p>A224 <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> European nightjar (breeding)</p> <p>A246 <i>Lullula arborea</i> Woodlark (breeding)</p> <p>A302 <i>Sylvia undata</i> Dartford Warbler (breeding)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reported levels of damage to designated sites</li> <li>• Conclusions of relevant specialist assessments</li> <li>• Reported condition of SPA sites</li> <li>• Published reports from relevant lead partner/agencies delivering Biodiversity 2020 Strategy</li> <li>• Available information regarding species population/habitat extent and condition from Natural England, local Wildlife Trusts, RSPB etc.</li> </ul>

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 C - Characteristics and Description of the Windsor Forest and Great Park 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 (H9190) 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 (H9120) is present at the site and supports many of the important invertebrate and fungi assemblage

### Conservation Objectives

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

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.

### 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

### **SSSI Condition**

The table below provides information on the condition of the SSSI making up the SAC at 24 May 2016.

#### **Condition of Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI (24 May 2016)**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>% of Area</b>
Favourable	51.84%
Unfavourable recovering	48.16%
Unfavourable no change	0%
Unfavourable declining	0%
Destroyed / part destroyed	0%

## APPENDIX D - Consultation Response from Natural England

Date: 07 June 2016  
Our ref: 187022  
Your ref: Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan



Cathy O'Connor  
Bracknell Forest Council

Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 8GJ

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Cathy

### **Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 03/06/2016.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England are supportive and in agreement with the conclusions of this document.

However, if further information was to be provided, then I think it could be possible to easily screen out the effects of this Neighbourhood Plan on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).

- If the neighbourhood plan does not allocate any housing, then it would be very easy to screen effects out
- If the neighbourhood plan does allocate housing, and does adhere to the Bracknell Local Plan Policy on Thames Basin Heaths, CS14, and identifies a potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG solution), then equally it will be easy to screen effects out
- If the neighbourhood plan does allocate housing, and doesn't include SANG or reference to CS14 then a full Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required

For clarification of any points in this letter, please contact Marc Turner on 02080267686. For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

Marc Turner  
Senior Planning Adviser

Thames Valley Area Team

## APPENDIX E - Consultation Response from 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, Berkshire, RG12 1JD

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

20<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Dear Ms O'Connor,

### **Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan – SEA Screening Consultation**

Thank you for your e-mail of 27<sup>th</sup> May seeking the opinion of Historic England on whether the Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

A search of the National Heritage List for England indicates that Winkfield has a substantial number of designated heritage assets, including a long-established conservation area for Winkfield and a more recent conservation area for Winkfield Row. The parish is therefore a sensitive historic environment.

We note from the Council's Screening Opinion that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to allocate sites for one or more uses such as local needs housing, community infrastructure, employment and other uses, and that the location, nature and size of these allocations are currently unknown. It appears likely to us that these allocation sites may affect designated heritage assets (or archaeological remains as identified on the Historic Environment Record, which should be consulted).

We therefore agree with the Council that there is the potential for the emerging Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan to have a significant environmental effect and that, accordingly, it will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

We would be pleased to review this opinion when further details of the likely allocations are known, although the SEA should itself influence the choice of sites.

We hope these comments are helpful. Please contact me if you have any queries.

Thank you again for consulting Historic England.

Cont'd



Historic England, Eastgate Court, 195-205 High Street, Guildford GU1 3EH  
Telephone 01483 25 2020 [HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk)

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.  
Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Small". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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

E-mail: [martin.small@historicensland.org.uk](mailto:martin.small@historicensland.org.uk)



## APPENDIX F - Consultation Response from the Environment Agency

creating a better place



Ms Cathy O'Connor  
Bracknell Forest Borough Council  
Planning & Transport Policy  
Time Square Market Street  
Bracknell  
Berkshire  
RG12 1JD

**Our ref:** WA/2011/110352/SE-  
04/SC1-L01

**Your ref:**

**Date:** 8 July 2016

Dear Ms O'Connor

**Re: Strategic Environment Impact Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report for Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan**

Thank you for consulting us on the above screening opinion. This consultation was received on 2 June 2016. After reviewing the screening report we have the following comments to make:

**Strategic Environment Impact Assessment (SEA)**

The central area of the neighbourhood plan is affected by flood zones 3 and 2. The screening report states that the plan is likely to allocate sites for development.

The area of the plan is also located within the groundwater Source Protection Zone 3 (SPZ3). This means that the area is a high sensitive location with regard to the protection of groundwater. SPZ3 identifies the catchment areas of sources of potable water and show where they may be at particular risk from polluting activities on or below the land surface.

Due to the above constraint if development was not managed appropriately then there could be a significant impact on the environment. Therefore we concur that an Environmental Report is necessary.

**Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

We have no comments to make on this.

**Advice to LPA and Winkfield Parish Council**

The sequential test should be applied for site allocations or any proposed development for local plans as set out in paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The aim should be to have all the allocated sites directed away from sites at higher risk of flooding.

Cont/d..



**Further Information**

We would like to offer the advice contained within our leaflet 'Planning for the environment at the neighbourhood level', A PDF copy is attached to this email for your convenience.

If you have any queries then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

**Miss Donatella Cillo**  
**Sustainable Places | Planning Advisor**

Direct dial 020302 58677

Email: [planning-farnham@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:planning-farnham@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX G - Consultation Statement

Consultee	Section	Comment	Officer Response	Recommendation
<b>Natural England</b>	General	<p>Natural England are supportive and in agreement with the conclusions of this document.</p> <p>However, if further information was to be provided, then I think it could be possible to easily screen out the effects of this Neighbourhood Plan on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If the neighbourhood plan does not allocate any housing, then it would be very easy to screen effects out</li> <li>- If the neighbourhood plan does allocate housing, and does adhere to the Bracknell Local Plan Policy on Thames Basin Heaths, CS14, and identifies a potential Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG solution), then equally it will be easy to screen effects out</li> <li>- If the neighbourhood plan does allocate housing, and doesn't include SANG or reference to CS14 then a full Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required</li> </ul>	Agreed.	<p>No change to screening outcome.</p> <p>Add reference to this comment into section 5, Conclusions, Consultation Responses.</p>
<b>Historic England</b>	SEA	<p>A search of the National Heritage List for England indicates that Winkfield has a substantial number of designated heritage assets, including a long-established conservation area for Winkfield and a more recent conservation area for Winkfield Row. The parish is therefore a sensitive historic</p>	<p>Agreed. Reference is included to the Conservation Areas in Table 2, row 2f.</p> <p>Reference to the Historic Environment Record should be made by the Winkfield</p>	<p>No change to screening outcome.</p> <p>Into section 5, Conclusions, Consultation Responses add reference to the need to consult the Historic Environment</p>

		<p>environment.</p> <p>We note from the Council's Screening Opinion that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to allocate sites for one or more uses such as local needs housing, community infrastructure, employment and other uses, and that the location, nature and size of these allocations are currently unknown. It appears likely to us that these allocation sites may affect designated heritage assets (or archaeological remains as identified on the Historic Environment Record, which should be consulted).</p> <p>We therefore agree with the Council that there is the potential for the emerging Winkfield Neighbourhood Plan to have a significant environmental effect and that, accordingly, it will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.</p>	Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group at the Scoping Stage.	Record at the Scoping Stage.
<b>Historic England</b>	SEA	We would be pleased to review this opinion when further details of the likely allocations are known, although the SEA should itself influence the choice of sites.	Noted	No change.
<b>Environment Agency</b>	SEA	<p>The central area of the neighbourhood plan is affected by flood zones 3 and 2. The screening report states that the plan is likely to allocate sites for development.</p> <p>The area of the plan is also located within the groundwater Source Protection Zone 3 (SPZ3). This means that the area is a high sensitive location with regard to the</p>	Agreed. Flood zones 2 and 3 and groundwater Source Protection Zone 3 contribute to the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected.	<p>No change to screening outcome.</p> <p>Add reference to flood zones 3 and 2 and the groundwater Source Protection Zone 3 to Table 2, row 2f.</p>

		<p>protection of groundwater. SPZ3 identifies the catchment areas of sources of potable water and show where they may be at particular risk from polluting activities on or below the land surface.</p> <p>Due to the above constraint if development was not managed appropriately then there could be a significant impact on the environment. Therefore we concur that an Environmental Report is necessary.</p>		
<b>Environment Agency</b>	HRA	No comment to make.	Noted.	No change.
<b>Environment Agency</b>	General	<p>Advice to LPA and Winkfield Parish Council</p> <p>The sequential test should be applied for site allocations or any proposed development for local plans as set out in paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The aim should be to have all the allocated sites directed away from sites at higher risk of flooding.</p>	Noted. The sequential test is outside of the scope of the SEA and HRA; however will need to be applied as set out in paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework.	<p>No change to screening outcome.</p> <p>Into section 5, Conclusions, Consultation Responses add reference to the need to undertake a sequential test for site allocations.</p>
<b>Environment Agency</b>	General	<p>Further Information</p> <p>We would like to offer the advice contained within our leaflet 'Planning for the environment at the neighbourhood level', A PDF copy is attached to this email for your convenience.</p>	Noted.	<p>No change to screening outcome.</p> <p>Into section 5, Conclusions, Consultation Responses add reference to the leaflet.</p>