



Basingstoke  
and Deane



# **Neighbourhood Planning Screening Report – Sherfield on Loddon**

**Final version following consideration  
by consultation bodies**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment  
and  
Habitats Regulations Assessment**

**Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council**

**March 2017**

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## 1. Non-technical Summary

- 1.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under European legislation for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment.
- 1.2 The purpose of SEA is to provide a high level of protection for the environment and to integrate considerations of the environment into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.
- 1.3 The SEA process sets out criteria for assessing the significance of the impact of a plan on the environment. For example, if a plan proposes a housing development it may have an impact on the wildlife of the area or have an impact on landscape. If a significant effect is possible, the assessment requires the consideration of alternative options and for the evaluation of the potential effects on the environment.
- 1.4 To ascertain if SEA is required, a “screening” exercise is undertaken which looks at the proposals and policies in a Neighbourhood Plan to see if a significant effect on the environment is likely. The criteria for making the screening assessment are set out in the relevant legislation.
- 1.5 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a process which looks at the potential impact of proposals within a plan on what are termed ‘European sites’. In relation to the Basingstoke and Deane area the relevant European sites are a number of Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) outside of, but within 10km of the borough.
- 1.6 The initial stage of the HRA process involves consideration of the reasons for designation and the conservation objectives of each European site within a reasonable distance of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The next stage is to consider the potential impact of the proposals within the plan on any European sites which could be affected.
- 1.7 **This report details the assessment of the Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan against the need for an SEA and/or HRA to be produced to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan. Following consultation with the three statutory consultees (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England), it concludes that an SEA is not considered to be required to accompany the Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan and that it would not need to be subject to HRA. The responses from the three consultation bodies can be found in Appendix 4 of this report.**

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan must comply with EU obligations. An important element of this requirement is that the borough council needs to determine whether the neighbourhood plan should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). This is an important legal requirement and a screening process in relation to this legislation should form an integral part of the neighbourhood planning process as early as possible. The main consideration will be whether the plan is likely to have significant environmental effects (in relation to SEA) or a significant effect on a European site (i.e. a site protected by the Habitats Directive).

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.2 The need for environmental assessment of Neighbourhood Plans stems from EU Directive 2001/42/EC – known as the SEA Directive. The SEA Directive applies to a wide range of public plans and programmes (e.g. on land use, transport, energy, waste, agriculture, etc. and includes those at the ‘local level’). The SEA Directive 2001 has been transposed into English law via The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (EAPP).
- 2.3 As per the information set out in the National Planning Practice Guide, it will be necessary for the borough council to screen the proposed Neighbourhood Plan in order to determine whether the plans/programmes are likely to have significant environmental effects<sup>1</sup>. The screening procedure is based on criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the EAPP Regulations 2004. This report assesses the Neighbourhood Plan against those criteria, and on that basis sets out whether an SEA (in the form of an Environmental Report) is required. Figure 2.1 below sets out the basic framework for establishing whether an SEA will be required.

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<sup>1</sup> The national practice guide states the following:

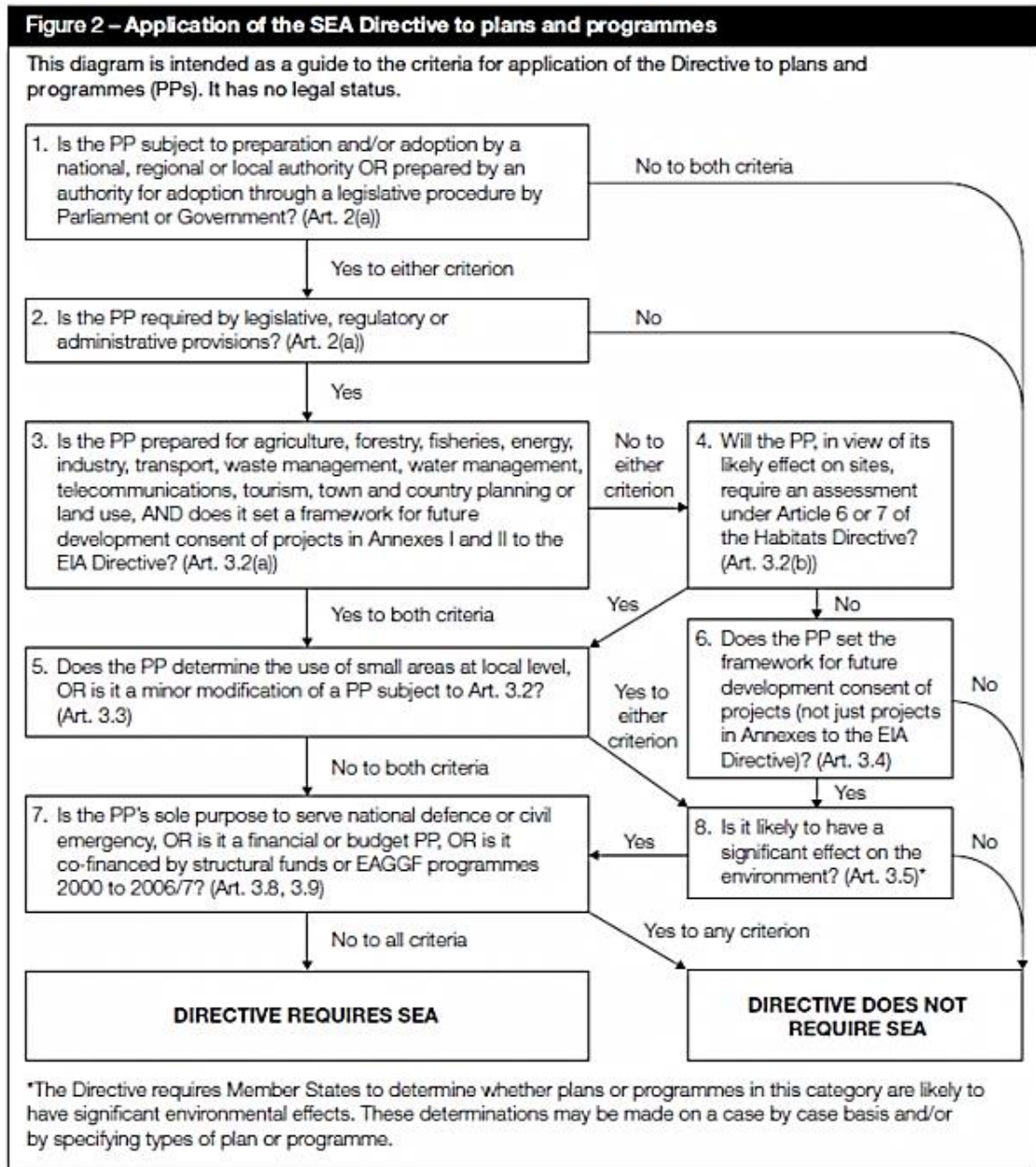
#### **Does a neighbourhood plan require a strategic environmental assessment?**

In some limited circumstances, where a [neighbourhood plan](#) could have significant environmental effects, it may fall within the scope of the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#) and so require a strategic environmental assessment. One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the [independent examiner](#) is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European obligations. Whether a neighbourhood plan requires a strategic environmental assessment, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft neighbourhood plan. A strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the [Local Plan](#).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

Figure 2.1 – Diagram indicating whether an SEA is required for a plan or project



## Habitats Regulations

- 2.4 In addition to the screening of Neighbourhood Plans in relation to SEA, there is a need to assess the likelihood of proposals or policies within a Neighbourhood Plan having an adverse impact on European sites<sup>2</sup>. This Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required by the

<sup>2</sup> In relation to the Basingstoke and Deane area, relevant European sites consist of areas designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA).

Habitats Directive as transposed into English law via The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

- 2.5 A Habitats Regulations Assessment may be required depending on the contents of the Neighbourhood Plan and the potential impact of the plan on European sites. A case by case assessment of Neighbourhood Plans will need to be undertaken to see if a full HRA is required.
- 2.6 The approach to assessing the potential impact of a Neighbourhood Plan on a European site, and the need for an HRA, include consideration of the reasons for designation and conservation objectives for each site within a reasonable distance from the Neighbourhood Plan area (which was set at 10km in the borough council's Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment and Addendum supporting the Adopted Local Plan 2011 - 2029). Where relevant the key environmental conditions that support the site are assessed below against the proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Consultation bodies**

- 2.7 Once the preliminary assessments of the requirement for both SEA and HRA had been undertaken, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England were consulted on the preliminary conclusions. Appendix 4 of this report incorporates the consultation responses provided by these consultation bodies, which have informed the finalised conclusions.

### 3. Generic Screening Assessment of Neighbourhood Plans

- 3.1 In the first instance, in order to establish if a Neighbourhood Plan potentially needs to be accompanied by a full SEA, a generic assessment of Neighbourhood Plans has been undertaken with the results of this assessment being set out below in Figure 3.1. The Assessment criteria set out in Figure 3.1 is derived from the government guidance produced to accompany the EAPP Regulations 2004: A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.2 The assessment below illustrates that Neighbourhood Plans can be subject to the SEA Directive, and concludes that the need for an SEA in respect of any particular Neighbourhood Plan will ultimately come down to whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, Neighbourhood Plans will need to be screened on a case by case basis.

Figure 3.1 - Generic screening assessment of Neighbourhood Plans

Assessment criteria	y/n	Assessment
1. Is the Neighbourhood Plan 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))	yes	Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by parish or town councils (as the “qualifying body”) under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. Once the Plan has been prepared, and subject to examination and referendum, it will be “made” by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority
2. Is the Neighbourhood Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	It is not a requirement for a parish to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. However, a Neighbourhood Plan, once “made” does form part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used when making decisions on planning

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[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7657/practicalguide\\_sea.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguide_sea.pdf)

		applications.
3. Is the Neighbourhood Plan prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	yes	Neighbourhood plans will cover town and country planning/land use, and may also cover other issues in the list set out. In addition, it will also set part of the framework for possible future consents covered by Annex II of the EIA Directive. Development under Annex I however, would be excluded development.
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))	?	Given that there are no sites designated under the Habitats Directive in the borough, the only impact on such sites could be on those outside the borough, and any effect on those sites is unlikely given the separation distances involved. However, a case by case assessment should still be carried out and included within the screening report.
5. Does the Neighbourhood Plan Determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	yes	A Neighbourhood Plan can determine the use of small areas at the 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)	yes	A Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan and therefore will be used in the decision making process in relation to planning applications. The policies in a Neighbourhood Plan therefore set the framework for future development proposals.
7. Is the Neighbourhood Plan sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF(European Agricultural Guarantee Fund) programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)	No	A Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with any of these categories of plan.

8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	?	The impact of a Neighbourhood Plan on the environment will depend on the proposals and policies included. For this reason <b>a case by case assessment of each Neighbourhood Plan will be required.</b>
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3.3 Given that Neighbourhood Plans may be subject to the requirement for an SEA where they are likely to have a significant effect on the environment, the next step is to establish how to determine whether such effects are likely when assessing each plan on a case by case basis. The criteria for making that assessment are set out in Schedule 1 of the EAPP Regulations 2004. Please see figure 3.2 below for a full list of the relevant criteria.

3.4 The list set out below forms the basis for the full assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan in question, which is set out in section 5 below.

Figure 3.2 - Criteria for determining likely significance of effects on the environment (as per section 9 of the EAPP Regulations 2004, this list is taken from Schedule 1 of the EAPP Regulations 2004).

#### **Schedule 1 - criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment**

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to –
  - (a) 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;
  - (b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
  - (c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
  - (d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
  - (e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to –

- (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- (b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
- (c) the trans-boundary nature of the effects;
- (d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
- (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- (f) 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 or limit values; or
  - (iii) intensive land-use; and
- (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

## 4. Description of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.1 The designated Neighbourhood Plan area covers the entire parish of Sherfield on Loddon, and is being prepared by the Parish Council.
- 4.2 The parish is mainly rural with the village concentrated to the north of the parish. The majority of housing falls within the village.
- 4.3 In terms of the environmental constraints associated with Sherfield on Loddon parish there are a number of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) including Long Copse, and ancient woodlands in the centre and north east of the parish. There are also areas within flood zones 2 and 3 running along the north, east and south parish boundary. Appendix 1 includes a map showing the main environmental constraints in the parish.
- 4.4 The Sherfield on Loddon Conservation Area is located to the south of the village and there are a number of listed buildings scattered throughout the parish. There are a number of Grade II and II\* regionally and locally listed buildings in the parish, particularly in the Conservation Area, including the Grade II\* Breach Barn and the Grade II Old Rectory. The council has adopted a Conservation Area appraisal for Sherfield on Loddon as Supplementary Planning Guidance, identifying notable features and key views - <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/page/33863/Conservation%20Area%20Appraisal%20for%20Sherfield%20on%20Loddon.pdf>
- 4.5 The Adopted Local Plan (ALP) 2011-2029 allocates housing sites that are located within the parish of Sherfield on Loddon. This includes the site allocation at Redlands (policy SS3.7) and part of the site allocation for the East of Basingstoke (policy SS3.9). In addition, land to the west and south of Sherfield on Loddon village is designated as a Strategic Gap in the ALP.
- 4.6 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan have been refined through local consultation. The Neighbourhood Plan aims to achieve the following:
- facilitate some new, albeit limited, new housing development, namely focusing residential development in the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) and limited development outside of the SPB in line with policies SS5 and SS6 of the ALP.
  - The provision of a mix of housing types in order to serve a range of people.

- To preserve or enhance the historic character and rural setting of the parish.
- Ensure that development is designed to a good standard.
- To protect and enhance the natural environment.
- To designate and protect Local Green Spaces.
- The provision of adequate infrastructure, particularly related to existing cycle and pedestrian routes.
- The provision of road safety measures.
- To support local community facilities
- To support the local economy and provide new business opportunities.

4.7 In light of the above the following policies are being proposed in the Sheffield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan:

- New housing within the SPB and outside of the SPB – to facilitate some new, albeit limited, new housing development, in line with policies SS5 and SS6 of the ALP
- Housing mix requirements and local connection requirements for affordable housing
- Protection and enhancement of the historic environment.
- Design requirements.
- Protection and enhancement of the natural environment
- Protection of Local Green Spaces.
- Flood risk
- Improvements to the footpath network.
- Creation of new cycle routes.
- Improvements to road safety.
- Protection of existing local community facilities and provision of opportunities for new community facilities.
- Provision of new employment opportunities/expansion of existing businesses.
- Enabling broadband and telecommunications connections.

## 5. SEA Screening Assessment

- 5.1 At this stage in the Neighbourhood Planning process it is difficult to know exactly what will be proposed in the final version of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the approximate parameters of the development and policies being proposed for inclusion in the draft Neighbourhood Plan, as set out in Section 4 of this report, have been used to undertake this screening assessment.
- 5.2 If it is found that an SEA is required in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan, any changes to the quantum of development can be assessed for environmental impact through the SEA process. If the conclusion of a screening exercise is that an SEA is not required, any changes to the quantum of development and/or policies being proposed should be subject to a further screening assessment to ensure that significant effects are not likely.
- 5.3 Under Criteria 8 of the assessment in Figure 3.1, it was concluded that Neighbourhood Plans may have a significant effect on the environment depending on the specific policies and proposals within it and that a case by case assessment is required. The criteria for undertaking such an assessment are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. Figure 5.1 below outlines the results of this assessment against the Annex II parameters.

### SEA Assessment of neighbourhood plan

Figure 5.1 - Assessment of likelihood of significant effects on the environment

Significant effect criteria	Assessment
The characteristics of the plan having regard to:	
(a) 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;	The Neighbourhood Plan will set a framework for various types of projects and activities, and in so doing will influence the size, location and operating conditions of the development in question. The policies in the Plan will also set criteria which will be applied to planning applications.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	Though unlikely, the Plan could inform supplementary planning documents (such as design guidance), development briefs or site specific guidance.

(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	The Plan will have regard to the objective of achieving sustainable development in the local area. It will be in conformity with the strategic policies in the ALP.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	The Plan will seek to address environmental, economic and social issues in the neighbourhood area.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The Plan is relevant to various aspects of Community legislation, such as environmental protection.
Characteristics of the effects likely having regard, in particular, to:	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The Plan will set the local vision, objectives and policies to guide new development in neighbourhood area. It is likely to result in long-term effects associated with changes to land use and physical development of land.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	There are likely to be some fairly limited local cumulative effects arising from and between the different proposals and policies in the Plan.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	There will be no transboundary effects (in relation to other EU member states).
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);	There are unlikely to be any significant risks to human health, though there is a limited risk of harm to the environment during construction works.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The magnitude of the effects will be regulated by the relatively small number of units likely to be supported by the Plan, meaning the effects are likely to be largely localised (i.e. within the neighbourhood area). However, there could be limited effects over a moderately larger area in relation to issues such as landscape impact and highways.

<p>(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to –</p> <p>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</p> <p>(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</p> <p>(iii) intensive land-use; and</p>	<p>There are various parts of the Neighbourhood Area which are both highly valued and vulnerable, namely the various SINCs, ancient woodlands and the Conservation Area. There are also Listed Buildings which could be affected (in terms of setting).</p>
<p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p>No part of the Neighbourhood Plan area is in the AONB, and it is sufficiently far removed that development is unlikely to impact upon the setting of the AONB.</p>

5.4 As a result of the analysis undertaken to assess the effects on the environment resulting from the Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that significant effects on the environment are not likely. The explanation of for this assessment is set out in more detail below.

5.5 The National Planning Practice Guide (NPPG) states that:

*“In some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment.”*

The NPPG sets out the following matters for consideration when assessing whether an SEA is required in connection with any particular neighbourhood plan:

*“Whether a neighbourhood plan requires a strategic environmental assessment, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed. A strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where:*

- *a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development*
- *the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan*
- *the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.”<sup>4</sup>*

5.6 In relation to the considerations set out above in the national level planning guidance the following factors are considered to be particularly pertinent. Firstly, the neighbourhood plan does not allocate any specific development sites. Therefore, this suggests that an SEA is less likely to be required. However, there are other environment considerations which have been set out in section 4 of this screening document.

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph: 047 Reference ID: 11-047-20150209

- 5.7 Another consideration is that whilst the neighbourhood plan does not allocate specific development sites, it does seek to facilitate some new, albeit limited, new housing development, namely focusing residential development in the SPB and limited development outside of the SPB in line with policies SS5 and SS6 of the ALP. In addition, the exact amount of development this will constitute cannot be precisely quantified at this stage. However, a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA) has already been undertaken by the borough council which considers the environmental impacts of all the ALP policies.
- 5.8 Given the amount of residential development proposed, it is likely that the environment effects will be localised, only involving limited landscape in respect of views, and highways impacts in relation to additional traffic on roads in the area.
- 5.9 It is also necessary to consider the impact of the neighbourhood plan on the conservation area, the setting of the listed buildings and other heritage assets and the other environmental considerations. In particular, there are Flood Zone 2 and 3 areas bordering, but within the parish boundary to the north, west and south. There are also a number of SINC's and ancient woodlands distributed around the neighbourhood area.
- 5.10 The Neighbourhood Plan area itself does not include any part of the North Wessex Downs AONB, and its closest part is approximately 5 km away. Given these separation distances, it is considered that the plan is not likely to have any impact upon its setting.
- 5.11 In respect of heritage impacts, the Conservation Area is located to the south of the village and is within the 7km SPA buffer zone, and there are a number of Listed Buildings in the neighbourhood plan area, including Breach Barn, which is Grade II\* Listed.
- 5.12 The scale of residential development that is being proposed by the neighbourhood plan is small scale and focused in the SPB and adjacent to the SPB, however, these could be in close proximity to areas within flood zones 2 and 3 and SINC's/ancient woodlands. The SA to the ALP provides an assessment of the environmental impacts of policies SS5 and SS6 as referred to above.
- 5.13 Therefore, in light of the above, and when considered in the context of the fact the NPPG states that an SEA is only likely to be required in 'some limited circumstances', it is considered that significant effects on the environment are not likely and hence an SEA is not required.

## 6. HRA Screening Assessment

- 6.1 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the assessment required for any plan or project to assess the potential implications for what are termed 'European sites'. Such sites consist of areas designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). There is also an international designation known as RAMSAR sites, which whilst being covered by different legislation should be subject to the same consideration as European sites.
- 6.2 There are no European sites in the borough. However, there are a number of SPAs and SACs located outside of the borough which could be affected by development taking place within the Basingstoke and Deane borough (please see Appendix 2 for the details of those areas). Therefore, it is still necessary to consider whether there could be any potential impact on European sites stemming from neighbourhood planning.
- 6.3 European sites are offered the highest level of protection under European law and the consequent national legislation transposing it into English law (The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, known as the Habitats Regulations). The Habitats Regulations sets out the process to assess the potential implications of a Neighbourhood Plan on European sites.
- 6.4 The first stage is to screen the Neighbourhood Plan in order to establish whether it may have a significant effect on a European site. Only if there may be such an effect will it be necessary to undertake a process called 'appropriate assessment'<sup>5</sup> in relation to a European site.
- 6.5 In undertaking the screening to establish whether there will be a significant effect, the 'precautionary principle' will need to be followed. The requirement to adhere to the precautionary approach is established by case law and clarified by European Union and domestic government guidance<sup>6</sup>. The use of the precautionary principle requires that when considering the likelihood of a possible effect on a European site it will

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<sup>5</sup> The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

**61.**—(1) A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which—

(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and

(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site, must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

<sup>6</sup> Landelijke Vereniging tot Behoud van de Waddenzee v. Secretary of State for Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Fisheries (Case C127/02), ECJ 7/9/04

be assumed that such impacts will occur if there is insufficient evidence to the contrary.

- 6.6 In carrying out the screening assessment, the borough council has addressed the various requirements set out in the European Commission guidance<sup>7</sup>. The guidance sets out various steps which need to be followed:
- i) description of project or plan
  - ii) characteristics of the European site
  - iii) assessment of significance
- 6.7 The description of the Neighbourhood Plan has been set out in section 4 above. Therefore, this section focuses on the characteristics of any relevant European sites, their significance, and ultimately whether there are likely to be any significant effects.
- 6.8 The ALP has been subject to a Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment. This contains a detailed assessment of each of the 8 European sites within 10km of the borough boundary. These are set out in Appendix 2 below, and inform the assessment process documented in this report. Appendix 3 includes maps of these sites, also taken from the Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment.
- 6.9 The implications of the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan have been assessed against each of the European sites within 10km of the neighbourhood area boundary in order to establish the likelihood of a significant effect on the reason for designation of the European site in question. This assessment has been undertaken having regard to the results and information in the HRA screening assessment prepared for the ALP, and in the light of the relevant European Commission guidance (as referred to above), which forms the basis for the assessment criteria set out below.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura\\_2000\\_assess\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_assess_en.pdf)  
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## Assessments of any European sites with 10km of the neighbourhood area

6.10 There is one European site within a 10km buffer zone of the neighbourhood area, namely the Thames Basin Heath SPA. Accordingly a screening matrix has been completed in relation to the SPA.

### Thames Basin Heath SPA

6.11 Approximately 50% of the parish of Sherfield on Loddon is within the 7km buffer zone of the SPA, with 0.2ha of the parish being within the 5km buffer zone of the SPA (see the constraints maps in appendix 1). The screening matrix below provides further detail in respect of the potential impacts of the neighbourhood plan on the SPA.

#### Screening Matrix

Name of European site<sup>8</sup>: Thames Basin Heath SPA

Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plan or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European site.	Small scale residential development within the neighbourhood area, in line with policies SS5 and SS6 of the ALP, will have a limited impact on the localised environment. In addition, the distance between the village of Sherfield on Loddon, where development would be primarily focused, and the SPA, which is over 5km, there will be no direct or significant impact on the European site.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European site by virtue of: size and scale; land-take; distance from the European site or key features; resource requirements (e.g. water abstraction); emissions; excavation requirements; transportation requirements; duration of construction activities.	The small scale residential development covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to result in few environmental impacts in the form of limited atmospheric pollution, as well as landscape and highways impacts. There would also be some limited, localised, environmental impacts flowing from construction processes. However, none of these would be of a scale which could reasonably be considered to impact significantly on the SPA, given the

<sup>8</sup> Please see Appendix 2 for details of the European site itself

	significant separation distance of over 5km between the village (where development will be primarily focussed) and the SPA.
Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: reduction of habitat area; disturbance to key species; habitat or species fragmentation; reduction in species density; changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); climate change.	Given the scale of development and that it will be primarily focussed on the village proposed by the Neighbourhood Plan, and the separation distance in relation to the SPA, no development in the neighbourhood area is likely to result in the impacts listed opposite.
Describe any likely impacts on the European site as a whole in terms of: interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site; interference with key relationships that define the function of the site.	Given the location of the neighbourhood area and that potential development sites are likely to be focussed on the village, there will be no likely impacts on the SPA as a whole.
Provide indicator of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of: loss; fragmentation; disruption; disturbance; changes to key elements.	The Plan is likely to facilitate small scale residential development, in line with policies SS5 and SS6, of the ALP. Therefore, having regard to the European Commission report concerning the assessment of the effects on Natura 2000 sites <sup>9</sup> , it is considered that there is likely to be a negligible impact on the significance of the European site, as there will be no loss, fragmentation or disturbance of habitat areas which form part of the European site
Describe from the above those elements of the plan where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.	Given the potential location of the development and the scale of development proposed in the plan relative to the SPA, it is considered there will be no significant impact on the SPA.
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>No significant effects on the SPA are considered to be likely.</b>

6.12 A very small part of the 5km SPA buffer zone is within the neighbourhood area. Given the nature of the development which is likely to be facilitated by the neighbourhood plan, which is small scale residential development, it is considered that the impacts of the plan

<sup>9</sup> Page 20, paragraph 3.1.5

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura\\_2000\\_asse ss\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_asse ss_en.pdf)

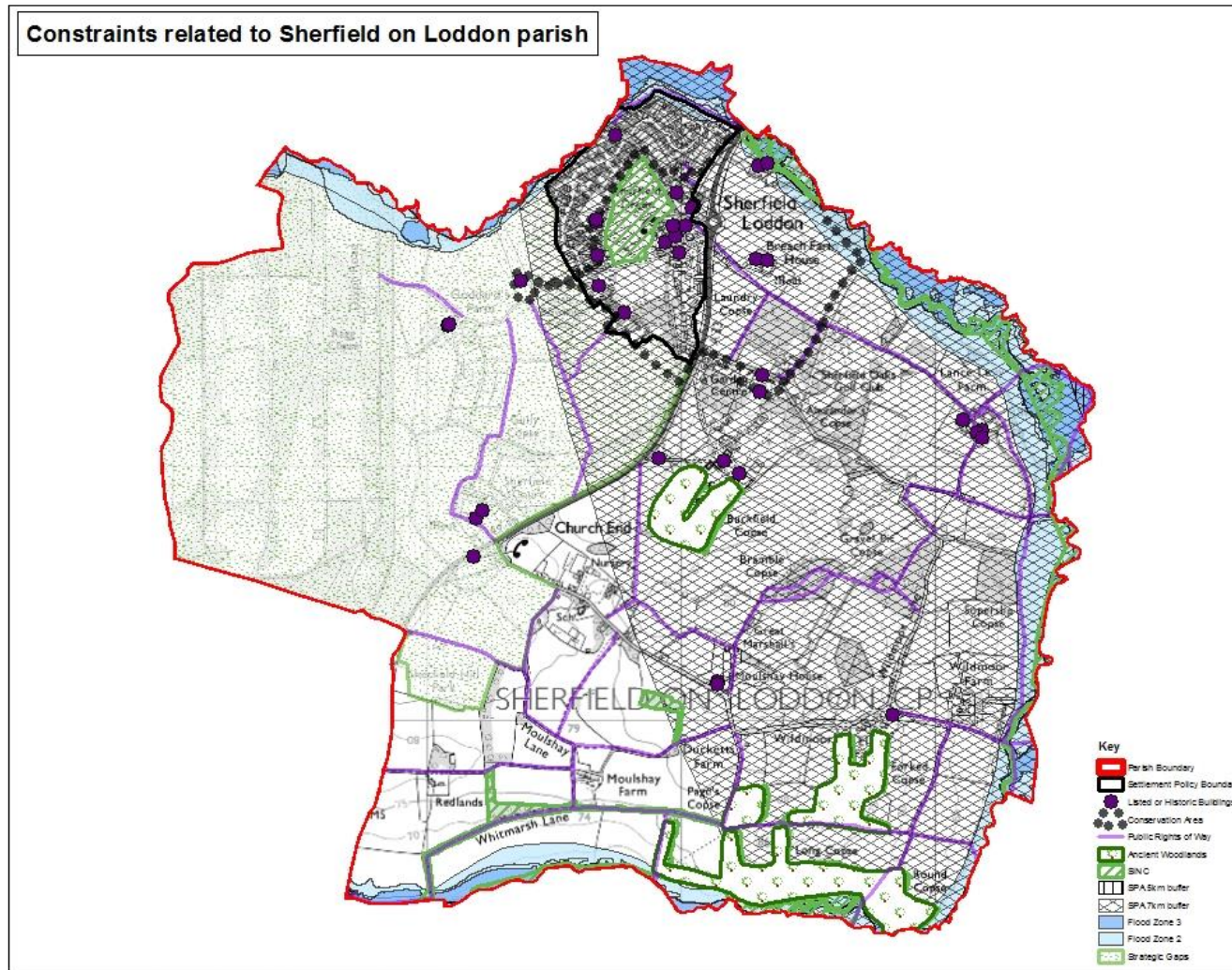
are likely to be fairly localised, and would not impact on the Thames Basin Heath SPA or any European sites. In addition, policy EM3 of the ALP provides an additional framework in relation to sites within the 5km buffer zone. For all net additional residential development within the 5km buffer zone will be required to provide and contribute towards suitable mitigation measures, such as the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) or contributions towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

- 6.13 Approximately 50% of the parish of Sherfield on Loddon is within the 7km buffer zone of the SPA. Although the Neighbourhood Plan facilitates small scale residential development in line with policies SS5 and SS6 of the ALP, it is prudent to highlight that any applications for large scale residential development (over 50 dwellings) within the 5-7km of the SPA will, as required by policy EM3 of the ALP, be assessed individually and, if needed, bespoke mitigation will be required in accordance with Natural England guidance.
- 6.14 In addition as stated earlier the ALP, including policies SS5, SS6 and EM3, have been subject to a Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment.

## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This report contains the assessment as to whether the Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to the requirement for the submission of an Environmental Report as required by the EAPP Regulations 2004 and/or Appropriate Assessment as required by the Habitats Regulations 2010.
- 7.2 The assessment for both of these requirements has been undertaken on the basis of proposals and policies outlined in Section 4 of this report and within the strategic framework of the ALP.
- 7.3 **The Local Authority has therefore concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required and the plan would not be subject to Habitat Regulations Assessment.**

## Appendix 1 – Environmental Constraints



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## **Appendix 2 – Details of European sites within 10km of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council**

### **Thames Basin Heaths SPA**

#### **Introduction**

The Thames Basin Heaths cover an area of 8,400 hectares and comprise a rare example of lowland heathland across Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire. The heaths support significant populations of 3 important bird species and consist of 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Hazeley Heath SSSI is the nearest part of the SPA to the borough (located within 5km of the borough boundary).

Due to the size, location and nature of this site and the surrounding development pressure, English Nature published a draft Delivery Plan for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA in May 2006. This was updated by the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Delivery Framework" published in January 2009 (Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board). The document sets out a strategic approach for development by providing a consistent method through which local authorities can meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations through avoidance and mitigation measures.

#### **Features of European Interest**

Annex I birds and regularly occurring migratory birds not listed on Annex I:

- *Caprimulgus europaeus* (nightjar)
- *Lullula arborea* (woodlark)
- *Sylvia undata* (Dartford warbler)

#### **Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site**

The mosaic of habitats which form the internationally important lowland heathland are dependent on active heathland management. Lack of grazing and other traditional management practices therefore pose a threat.

Development pressure on neighbouring land, urbanisation issues and the cumulative and indirect effects of neighbouring developments also pose a potential long-term problem. A strategic approach to accommodating development whilst ensuring compatibility with the Habitats Regulations is being addressed through the Thames Basin Heaths Area Based Delivery Project. This seeks to address the detrimental impacts of recreational pressure, particularly dog walking, on ground nesting bird populations.

## **Wealden Heaths phase II SPA**

### **Introduction**

The Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA is located across the counties of Surrey, Hampshire and West Sussex and comprises 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, namely Woolmer Forest SSSI and SAC, Broxhead and Kingsley Commons SSSI, Bramshott and Ludshott Commons SSSI and Devil's Punchbowl SSSI. A small area to the south east of the borough is located within 10km of the SPA.

### **Features of European Interest**

Annex I birds and regularly occurring migratory birds not listed on Annex I:

- *Caprimulgus europaeus* (nightjar)
- *Lullula arborea* (woodlark)
- *Sylvia undata* (Dartford warbler)

### **Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site**

The heathland habitats of the Special Protection Area are very dependent upon grazing and other traditional management practices. The SPA is vulnerable to urbanisation issues, fly tipping and heathland fires and there is increasing pressure for development associated with military training activities. Formal and informal recreation activities are a potential threat to the breeding success of Annex 1 birds. The heaths are also dependent on high water tables to maintain their features of interest, and are therefore sensitive to any potential lowering of water levels due to water abstraction. In the most recent condition assessment process, parts of the heathland were not in favourable condition, with concerns about inappropriate vegetation species, vehicle damage and invasive species.

## East Hampshire Hangers SAC

### Introduction

The East Hampshire Hangers SAC is a large complex of predominantly broadleaved deciduous woodland comprising seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

- Upper Greensand Hangers: Wyck to Wheatley
- Wick Wood and Worldham Hangers
- Coombe Wood and The Lythe
- Selborne Common
- Noar Hill
- Wealden Edge Hangers
- Upper Greensand Hangers: Empshott to Hawkley

### Features of European Interest

The East Hampshire Hangers qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites: Noar Hill in particular, has an outstanding assemblage of orchids, including one of the largest UK populations of the nationally scarce musk orchid *Herminium monorchis*;
- Beech forests on neutral to rich soils: the site is extremely rich in terms of vascular plants;
- Mixed woodland on base-rich soils associated with rocky slopes: along with Rook Clift SAC, in the south-east of England, this habitat is only represented here;
- Dry grasslands or scrublands on chalk or limestone (though not a primary reason for site selection);
- Yew-dominated woodland (though not a primary reason for site selection).

Secondly, the site contains the Habitats Directive Annex II species early gentian *Gentianella anglica* and *Triturus cristatus* (great crested newt).

The key environmental conditions that have been defined for this site are:

- Maintenance of grazing;
- Absence of direct fertilisation; and
- Low nutrient runoff from surrounding land although the Hanger woodlands are vulnerable to nutrient run-off leading to eutrophication;
- Minimal air pollution – nitrogen deposition may cause reduction in diversity, sulphur deposition can cause acidification;
- Well-drained soils.

### **Key environmental conditions / vulnerability of the site**

Being steep and narrow, the Hanger woodlands are vulnerable to nutrient runoff from adjacent agricultural land, leading to eutrophication and growth of ruderal vegetation when, for example neglected coppice is cut. Within the Hangers over-maturity and outbreaks of beech disease have been observed. Management is hampered by sparse mast years, few seed trees, the presence of deep litter layers and difficulties in extracting felled timber due to the steep slopes present.

Natural England will be exploring mechanisms that can be put in place to curtail damaging agricultural activities in the vicinity of the site. Natural England is liaising closely with the Forestry Commission regarding positive management of these woodlands through Woodland Grant Schemes and, for example, the Challenge Fund.

## **Kennet & Lambourne Floodplain SAC**

### **Introduction**

The Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC is a composite site of approximately 114 hectares located within West Berkshire and Wiltshire. The site has the general character of 59% bogs, marshes and water fringed vegetation, 40% humid and Mesophile grassland, and 1% standing or running water.

The cluster of sites selected in the Kennet and Lambourn valleys support one of the most extensive known populations of Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*) in the UK. The conservation objective related to the sites' designation is to maintain in favourable condition, the habitat for the population of Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*).

### **Features of European Interest**

The Kennet and Lambourne Floodplain SAC qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation

Secondly, the site contains the Habitats Directive Annex II species:

- Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey)
- Cottus gobio* (bullhead)

### **Key environmental conditions / vulnerability of the site**

The River Lambourn has one of the least modified catchments in southern England and has one of the lowest levels of abstraction. Water quality, water quantity and habitat quality are all considered to be high. However, localised higher water nutrient levels and siltation problems are at present associated with sewage treatment works. Natural England and the Environment Agency have produced an agreed protocol for dealing with issues affecting the river.

## **Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC**

### **Introduction**

The Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC consists of two sites of approximately 56 hectares in total located within West Berkshire in the Kennet floodplain. Its general site characteristic is of broad leaved deciduous woodland. The woodlands are the largest remaining fragments of damp, ash-alder woodland in the Kennet floodplain area. The conservation of the site is dependent upon maintaining a constantly high groundwater level.

### **Features of European Interest**

The Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC qualify as a SAC for containing the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno- Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)

### **Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site**

The conservation interest of the site is critically dependent upon maintenance of constantly high groundwater levels. However, there are no known threats to groundwater levels. The site is subject to low levels of intervention and natural processes are allowed to prevail to a large extent. A Woodland Grant Scheme is in place which favours the maintenance of the characteristic alder woodland composition.

## River Itchen SAC

### Introduction

The River Itchen is a chalk river that rises from the chalk aquifer of the Hampshire Downs (near Alresford) and flows through Winchester to join the Solent at Southampton. It hosts a number of habitats which support nationally and internationally important plants and animals. These require certain water levels with little variation over the course of a year, and fast flow rates. The whole river, including its three headwater tributaries, are designated as a SSSI.

### Features of European Interest

The River Itchen SAC qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation

Secondly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex II species:

- *Vertigo moulinsiana* (Desmoulin's whorl snail)
- *Coenagrion mercuriale* (Southern damselfly)
- *Austropotamobius pallipes* (white-clawed crayfish)
- *Petromyzon marinus*
- *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey)
- *Lampetra fluviatilis*
- *Salmo salar* (atlantic salmon)
- *Cottus gobio* (bullhead)
- *Lutra* (otter)

### Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

The river's ecology depends on maintaining a uniform, fast flow of water. A principal threat to the habitats within this SAC is considered to be the decrease in flow velocities and increase in siltation, in turn affecting macrophyte cover. Recent surveys have shown declines in *Ranunculus* cover since 1990, attributable to increased abstractions in the upper catchment, coupled with a series of years with below-average rainfall. Low flows interact

with nutrient inputs from point sources to produce localised increases in filamentous algae and nutrient-tolerant macrophytes at the expense of *Ranunculus*.

The Environment Agency is initiating a major study of the river's macrophytes, from which a predictive model will be developed which will aid decisions on whether to reduce water abstraction at critical times. Efforts are currently being made to increase the viability of the southern damselfly population through population studies and a Species Action Plan.

## River Lambourn SAC

### Introduction

The River Lambourn SAC consists of the River Lambourn water body over an area of 27 hectares. The River Lambourn rises in the chalk of the Berkshire Downs, is 26 km long, and flows through the Kennet Valley to Newbury where it joins the River Kennet. It has one important tributary, the Winterbourne stream, which flows into the Lambourn from the north-east, just upstream of Newbury. It is also a designated SSSI.

### Features of European Interest

The River Lambourn SAC qualify as a SAC for both habitats and species. Firstly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitans* and *Callitriche-Batrachium* vegetation

Secondly, the site contains the following Habitats Directive Annex II species:

- *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey)
- *Cottus gobio* (bullhead)

### Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site

The River Lambourn has one of the least modified catchments in southern England and has one of the lowest levels of abstraction. Water quality, water quantity and habitat quality are all considered to be high. However, localised higher water nutrient levels and siltation problems are at present associated with sewage treatment works. Natural England and the Environment Agency have produced an agreed protocol for dealing with issues affecting the river.

## **Shortheath Common SAC**

### **Introduction**

Shortheath Common is a heathland site located on the western Weald. It comprises a single SSSI which covers approximately 58 hectares. The site was historically grazed but now is recovering from the encroachment of scrub.

### **Features of European Interest**

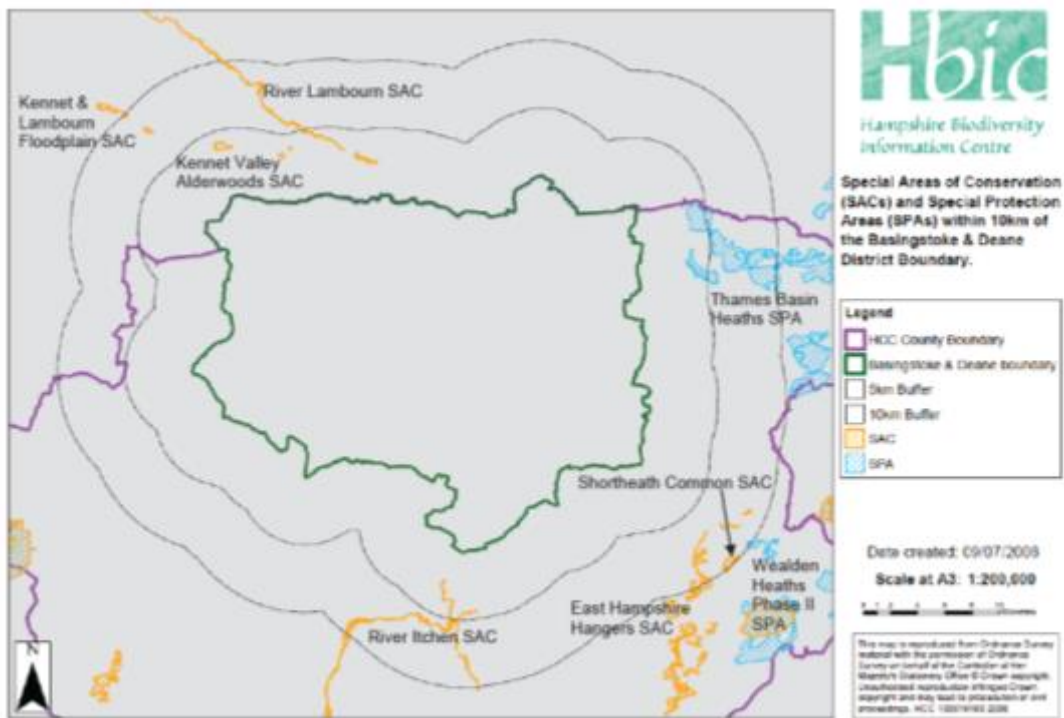
The Shortheath Common SAC qualifies as a SAC for containing the following Habitats Directive Annex I habitats:

- Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds
- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix*
- European dry heaths
- Transition mires and quaking bogs
- Bog woodland

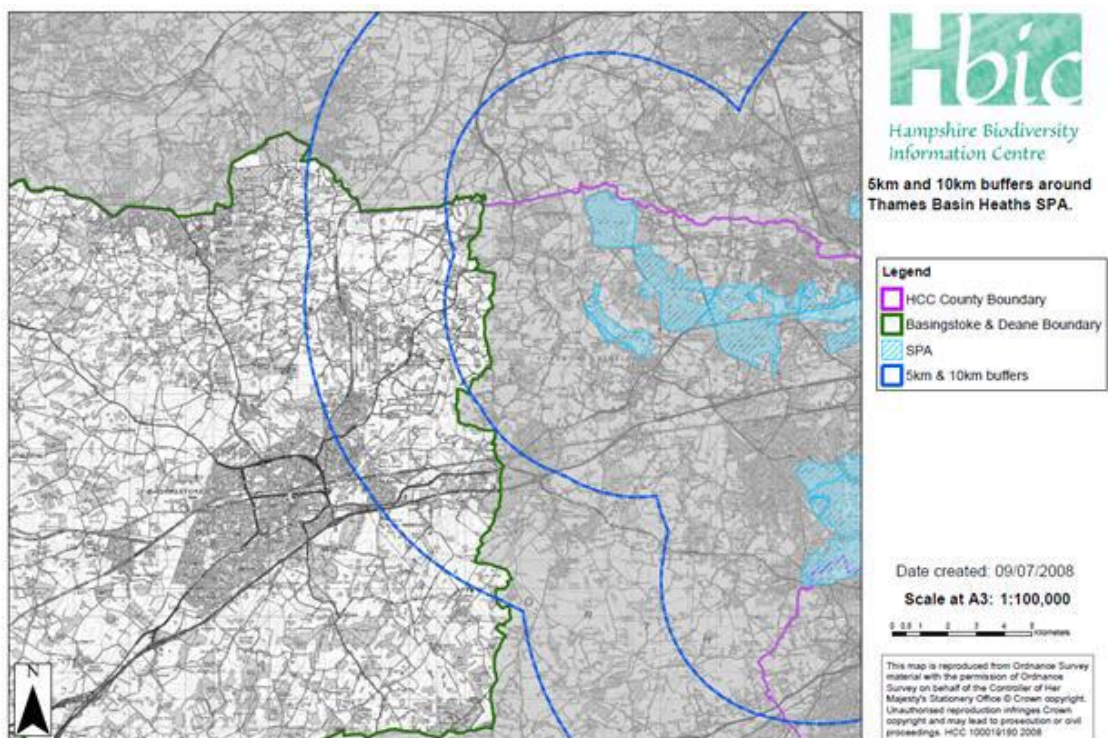
### **Key environmental conditions/ vulnerability of the site**

The site is vulnerable to encroachment of invasive scrub and trees due to cessation of traditional grazing management. Erosional risk and fire are also threats. A Natural England Wildlife Enhancement Scheme agreement has been entered into in an attempt to address the ecological deterioration. The heaths are also dependent on high water tables to maintain their features of interest, and are therefore sensitive to any potential lowering of water levels due to water abstraction. Protection of the site therefore relies on careful management of water levels and recreational activities and good air quality.

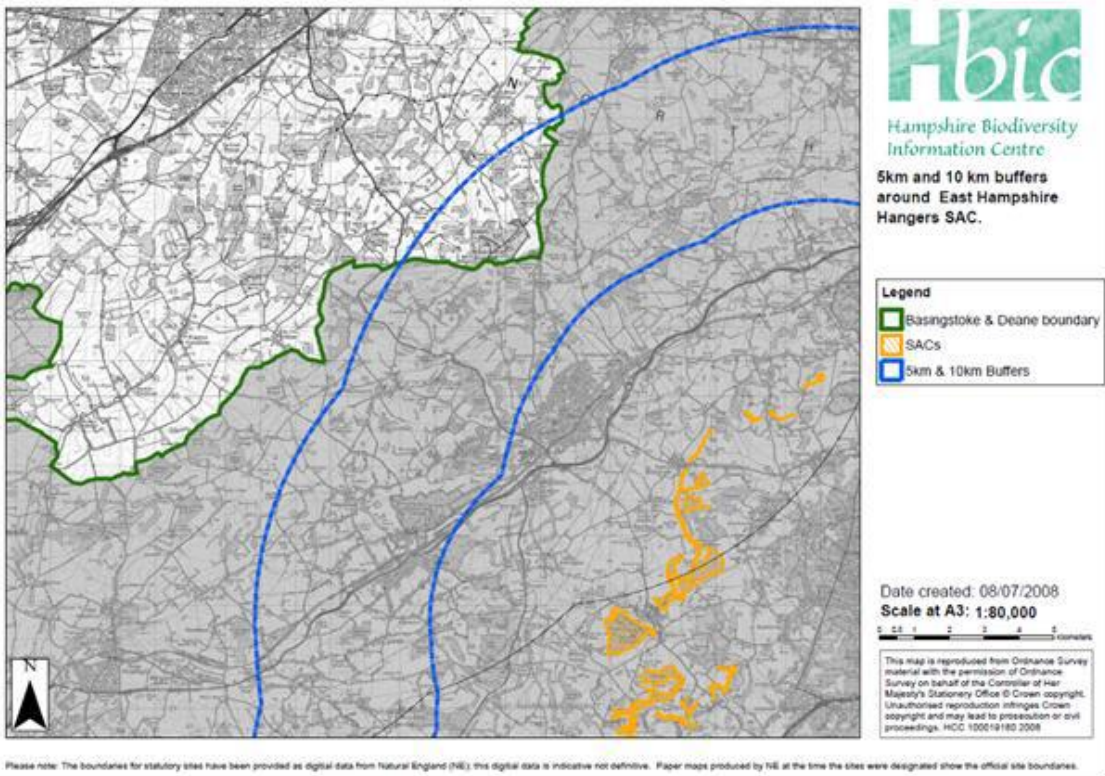
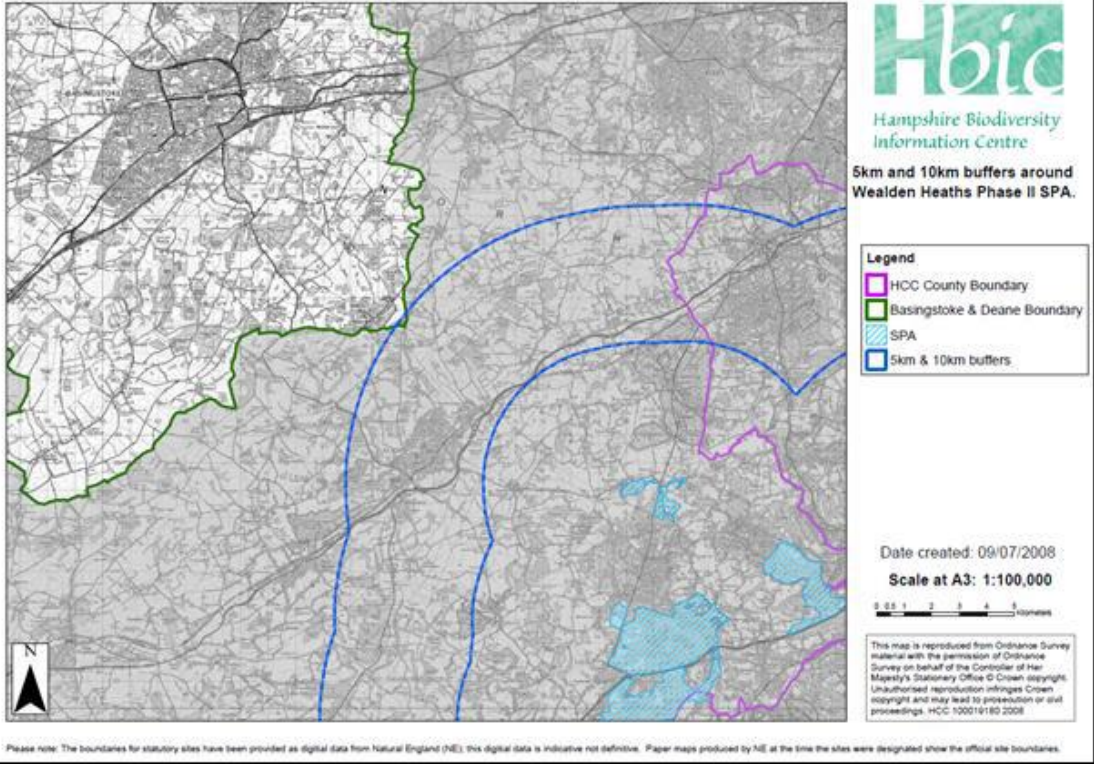
## Appendix 3 - Maps of European sites within 10km of Basingstoke and Deane Borough

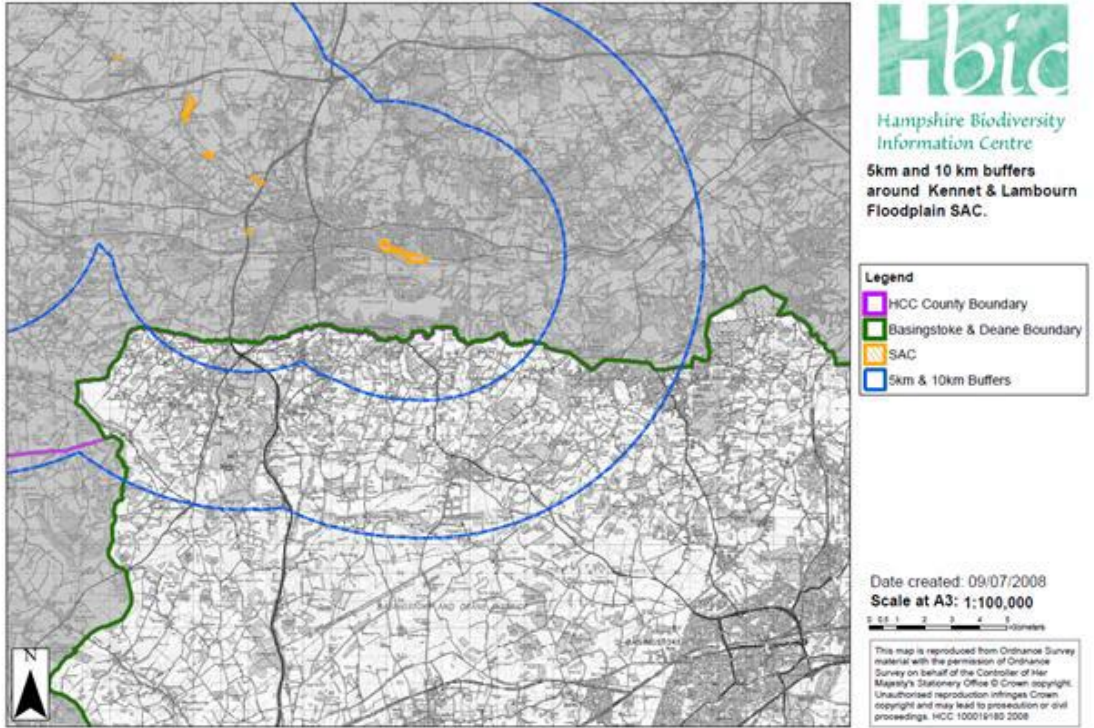


Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.

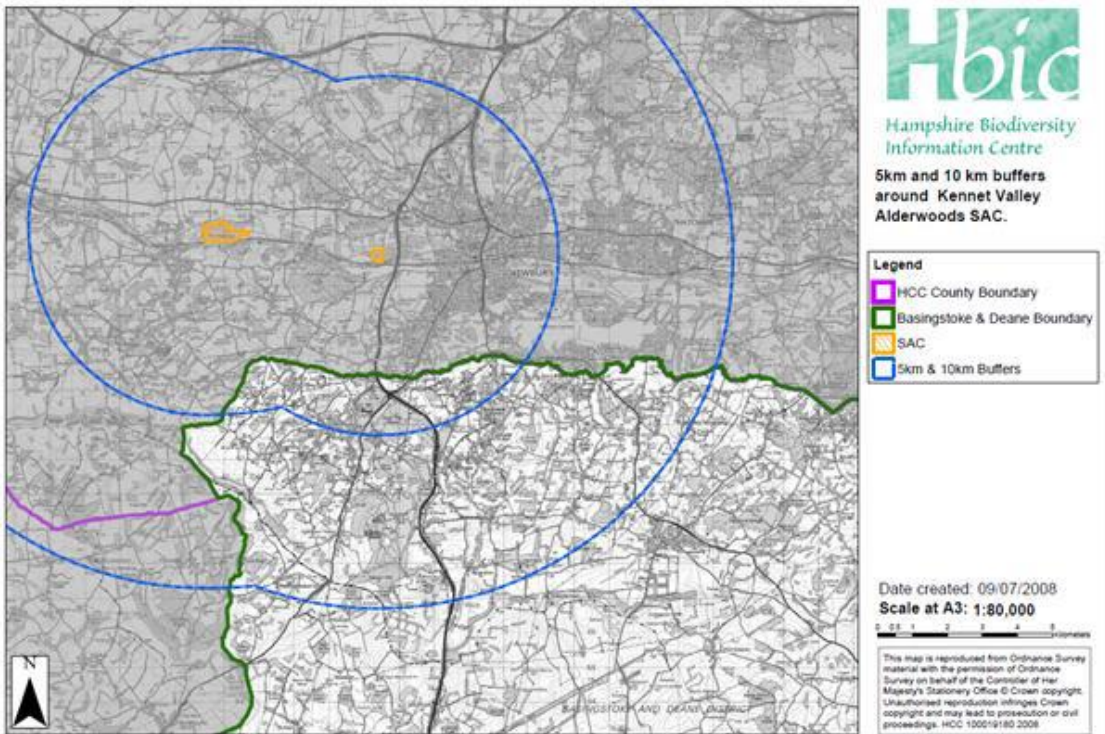


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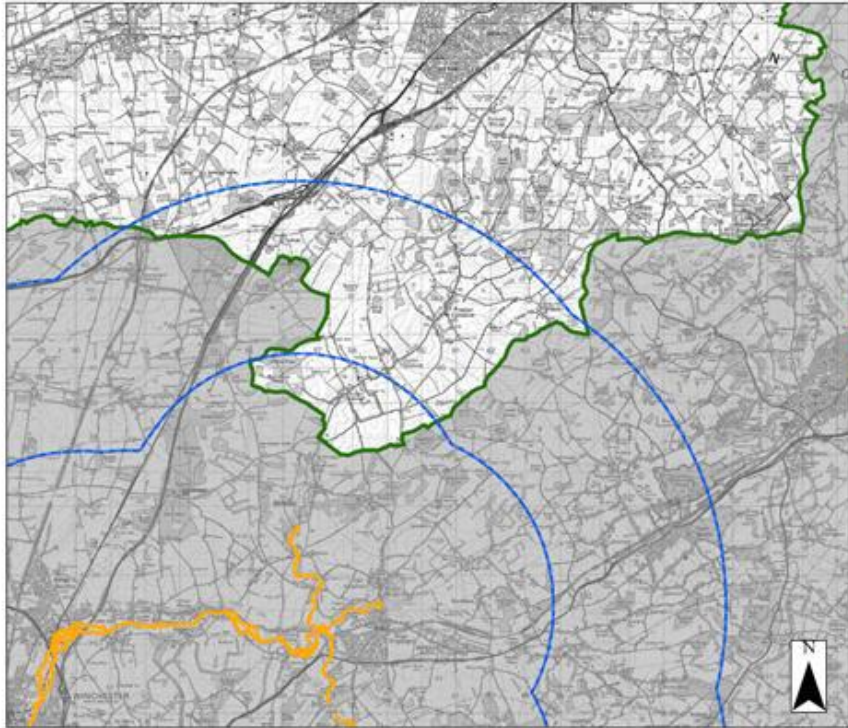




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**Hbic**  
Hampshire Biodiversity  
Information Centre

**5km and 10 km buffers  
around River Itchen  
SAC.**

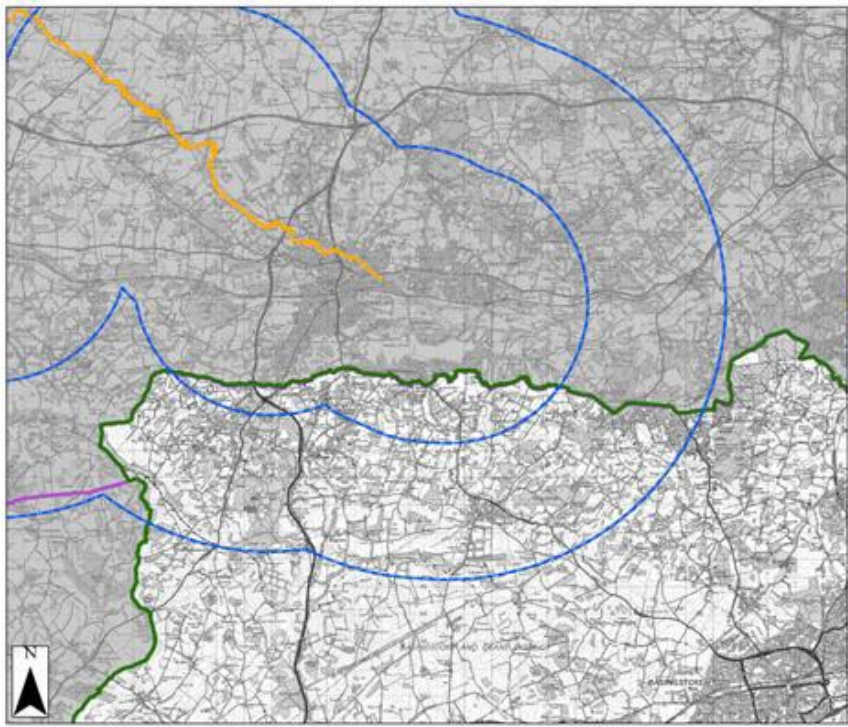
- Legend**
- Basingstoke & Deane Boundary
  - SAC
  - 5km & 10km Buffers

Date created: 09/07/2008  
Scale at A3: 1:80,000



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Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.



**Hbic**  
Hampshire Biodiversity  
Information Centre

**5km and 10 km buffers  
around River Lambourn  
SAC.**

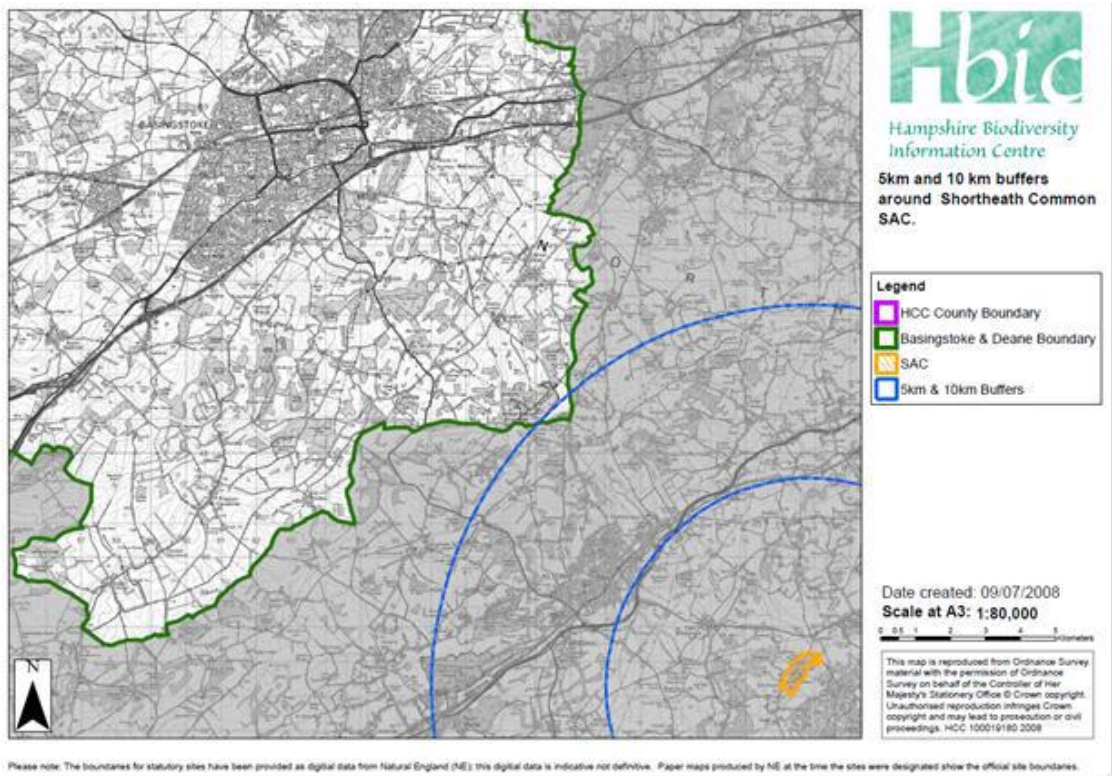
- Legend**
- HCC County Boundary
  - Basingstoke & Deane boundary
  - SAC
  - 5km & 10km Buffers

Date created: 09/07/2008  
Scale at A3: 1:100,000



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Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.



(Source for all: Basingstoke and Deane Pre-Submission Local Plan Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment)

## **Appendix 4 – Responses from Consultation bodies**

Mr Edward Rehill  
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council  
Planning Policy  
Civic Offices London Road  
Basingstoke  
Hampshire  
RG21 4AH

**Our ref:** WA/2011/109908/OR-  
29/IS1-L01  
**Your ref:**  
**Date:** 27 February 2017

Dear Mr Rehill

### **SEA screening opinion – Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan**

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the SEA screening opinion for the Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan. We apologise for the delay of our response. We are a statutory consultee in the SEA process and aim to reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment. We have reviewed the draft plan, and have identified the following environmental constraints that relate to the Neighbourhood Plan area:

#### **Flood risk**

As you have stated in paragraph 4.3 of your screening report, there are areas of flood zone 2 and 3 within the neighbourhood plan area. However, we note that the approved local plan allocation site East of Basingstoke includes in policy SS3.9 a requirement for development to avoid the areas of the site within flood zones 2 and 3; and that site SS3.7 (Redlands) is outside of flood zones. We note too that both policies SS3.9 and SS3.7 in the approved local plan include requirements for adequate sewerage infrastructure (on and off site) to be provided, and for drainage strategies to be produced.

Furthermore we note that the neighbourhood plan does not propose to allocate any specific development sites.

#### **Main rivers**

A number of rivers border the neighbourhood plan area including the River Loddon, the Petty's Brook and the Bow Brook. These watercourses are currently failing to reach good ecological potential under the Water Framework Directive: parts of the Loddon are currently classified as moderate, and parts as poor. Developments within or adjacent to these watercourses should not cause further deterioration and should seek to improve the water quality based on the recommendations of the Thames River Basin Management Plan.

For your information we have published joint advice with Natural England, English Heritage and the Forestry Commission on neighbourhood planning which sets out

Cont/d..



sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans.

This is available at:

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT\\_6524\\_7da381.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328084622/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/LIT_6524_7da381.pdf)

Your Lead local flood authority's Surface Water Management Plan will indicate if there are any critical drainage areas from local sources of flood risk (e.g. surface water, groundwater and sewerage) which coincide with the neighbourhood plan area.

In conclusion, whilst we are aware of the environmental constraints mentioned above which affect the plan area, we agree with your assessment that the neighbourhood plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

Yours sincerely

**Judith Johnson**  
**Sustainable Places team**

Direct dial 020 3025 9495

e-mail [planning-wallingford@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:planning-wallingford@environment-agency.gov.uk)



Mr Edward Rehill  
Principal Planning Officer  
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
London Road  
Basingstoke  
Hampshire, RG21 4AH.

Our ref: HD/P5229/  
Your ref:  
Telephone 01483 252040  
Fax

6<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Mr Rehill,

### **Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion**

Thank you for your e-mail of 3<sup>rd</sup> March setting out additional information regarding the Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan and requesting Historic England to reconsider our opinion that the Plan should be Strategic Environmental Assessment as set out in our letter of 10<sup>th</sup> February.

In our previous letter we noted the historic environment of Sherfield on Loddon and concluded, on the basis of the limited information available to us at that time, that there would appear to be some limited potential for significant effects on the historic environment of the Plan area.

However, we also noted that if the Plan was to include a policy to conserve and enhance local heritage assets or the policy allowing development within the settlement included a criterion allowing development only where there would be no adverse impact on such assets, we would be likely to be satisfied that the Plan would be unlikely to lead to any significant effects on the historic environment such that SEA would not be required.

In your recent e-mail you draw our attention to the historic environment criterion of draft Policy H2 and to Policies D1 and D2. Whilst these do provide protection for the historic character of areas, and for areas of historic character, within the Plan area, they do not quite provide the protection for the significance of heritage assets that we were envisaging, although criterion of Policy D2 come very close. We can provide further comment on these policies when consulted on the Neighbourhood Plan itself.

As regards the need for SEA of the Plan, we previously recognised that the potential for significant effects on the historic environment of the Parish was limited. Although the criteria in the draft policies to which you have alerted us are not quite as comprehensive as we might wish, we do accept that they reduce the likelihood of significant effects on the historic environment from development permitted by Policy H2 still further

- 2 -



Therefore, based on the additional information now provided to us, (and notwithstanding that the SEA/SA of Policy SS5 of the Local Plan does not provide any comfort as regards the potential impact of that policy on heritage assets given the conclusion of the SEA/SA's assessment against Objective 15) we are content to revise our previous position and for the Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan to proceed without the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment. However, we reserve the right to revise that opinion again when we see the draft Plan in its entirety.

As before, we would also note that, as you and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are aware, one of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the neighbourhood plan is compatible with European Union obligations (including under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive). The responsibility for ensuring that the Plan meets the basic conditions lies with the qualifying body and yourselves as the authority that will make the Plan if it passes the referendum.

Even if a formal SEA is not currently believed to be necessary, we would nevertheless suggest that the Plan is subject to a form of sustainability appraisal to assess and monitor the Plan's policies and proposals against a set of agreed objectives.

Thank you again for seeking the views of Historic England on this Screening Opinion. If you have any queries, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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

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



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.



Date: 28 February 2017  
Our ref: 206662  
Your ref: No reference given



Edward Redhill  
Principle Planning Officer  
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Edward

**Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA screening report**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 20<sup>th</sup> January 2017

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 is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

**Natural England's opinion is that we concur with the screening assessments and conclusions in the Sherfield on Loddon Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA screening report dated January 2017**

Natural England does not have any further specific comments on this screening report.

We also refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

For clarification of any points in this letter, please contact Dr Pauline Holmes on 0208 2256972 For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk).

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

*P Holmes*

Dr Pauline Holmes  
Sustainable Development Lead Advisor  
Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Area Team