

Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Development Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

Screening Statement - Determination under Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

**Revised Screening Determination Report
10/07/2023**

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Appendix 1 – Response received from Natural England

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This statement sets out the final determination by East Hampshire District Council on behalf of Bramshott and Liphook Parish Council, under Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. This determination concerns whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment and/or Habitats Regulations Assessment is required for the Bramshott and Liphook Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 1.2. The parish of Bramshott & Liphook includes areas within the South Downs National Park, although East Hampshire District Council acts as lead local planning authority in supporting the Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Development Plan. Due to the potential for cross-boundary effects, this screening opinion has been issued to officers of the South Downs National Park Authority for comment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.3. Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (implementing Directive 2001/42/EC known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive), specific types of plans that set out the framework for future development consent of projects must be subject to an environmental assessment.
- 1.4. 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.
- 1.5. A draft neighbourhood plan must meet a set of basic conditions in order to be put to a referendum. One of these conditions is that the plan does not breach, or is otherwise compatible with EU obligations such as (where appropriate) the requirement for SEA. Under Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, a responsible authority (such as a parish council or a local planning authority, in the case of an emerging Neighbourhood Plan) must determine if a neighbourhood plan requires an environmental assessment. The need for SEA is considered under Section 3 of this report. If SEA is not required under Regulation 9(3), a statement must be prepared setting out the reasons for this determination.

Habitats Regulations

- 1.6. European Designated sites are nature conservation sites of European importance and include Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for Birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for habitat types and species (excluding birds). They were created under the EC Birds Directive and Habitats Directive and form part of a larger European network called Natura 2000.
- 1.7. Any plans or projects, including a neighbourhood plan, which propose development which may have an adverse or significant impact on a European Designated site will be required

to carry out a Habitats Regulation Assessment pursuant to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 (as amended).

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.8. Under separate legislation (the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated Regulations), a local planning authority must carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of its proposals, when preparing a local plan. Neighbourhood plans are excluded from this requirement, however they must still contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Sustainability Appraisal for the East Hampshire District Local Plan incorporates the requirements of SEA, and so the Local Plan's Sustainability Appraisal (SA) provides relevant information for determining the potential environmental effects of implementing the draft neighbourhood plan, and their significance.

SEA & HRA Determination and Reasons for Determination

- 1.9. Before making a determination under Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, the three consultation bodies are being consulted. Natural England is also being consulted before making a determination under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The responses received will be set out in Table 1.1 below:

Table 1.1 – Comments received by Consultation bodies

Consultation Body	Comments
Environment Agency	No response received
Historic England	In terms of our area of interest, given the nature of the plan, we concur with your assessment that the plan is unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects and will simply provide additional guidance on existing policies within an adopted Development Plan Document which has already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal/SEA. As a result, we endorse the conclusion that it is not necessary to undertake SEA of this plan.
Natural England	<p>Natural England has no specific comments to make on this Neighbourhood Plan SEA/ HRA screening assessment consultation. However, we refer you to the advice in the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.</p> <p>We are not aware of significant populations of protected</p>

Consultation Body	Comments
	species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

2. Scope of the draft Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Plan

2.1. The NDP area shares its boundary with Bramshott and Liphook parish (Figure 2.1).

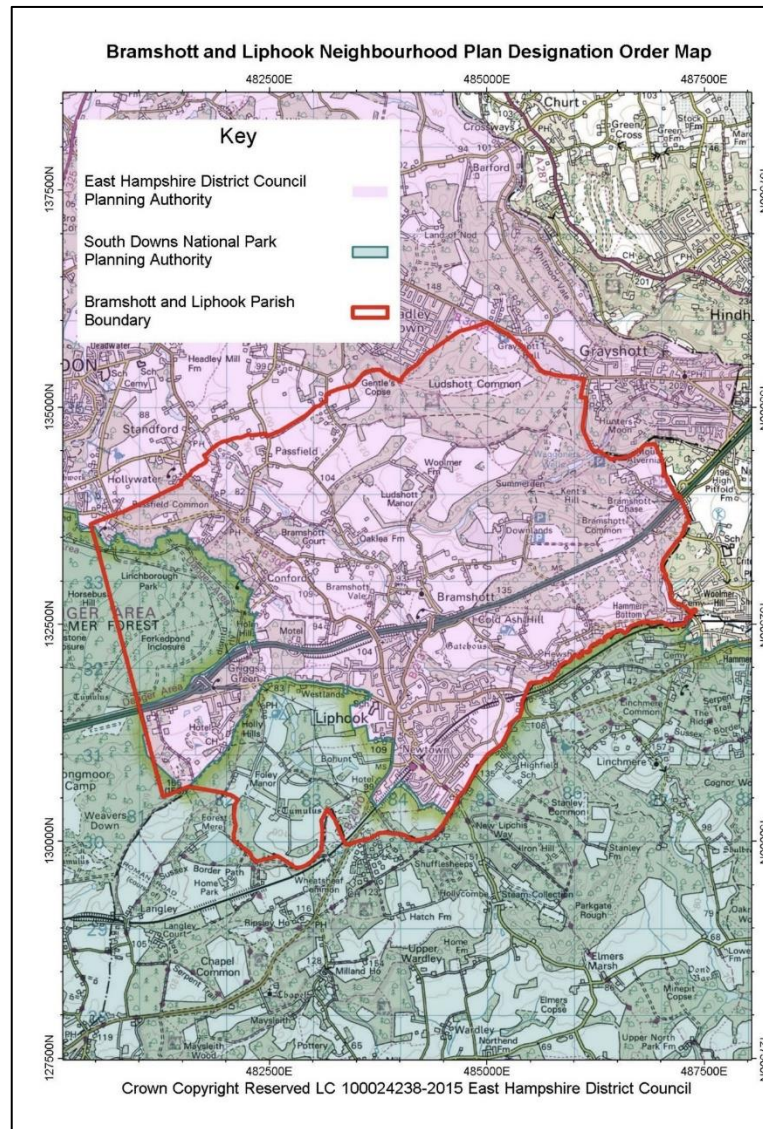


Figure 2.1: Bramshott and Liphook Neighbourhood Area boundary

- 2.2. The purpose of the Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Plan is to address six policy themes, which are as follows: Sustainable Development and Housing; Environment and Green Space, Transport and Movement, Conserving Heritage; Community Facilities; and Supporting the Local Economy.
- 2.3. A copy of the draft NDP is attached with this screening report.
- 2.4. In general terms, the NDP seeks to guide the principles for the use of land for housing and business whilst safeguarding and improving valued features of the local environment. The vision and objectives of the Bramshott and Liphook NDP is as follows:

Bramshott and Liphook is Healthy, Sustainable and Thriving



- 1. Sustainable development and housing:** There are well designed affordable community focused homes of the right size and tenure. They allow growth and adaptation to serve all phases of life, promoting health & wellbeing. The architecture uses passive energy and low carbon building materials and there is increased biodiversity and reduced carbon emissions for existing and proposed development.
- 2. Biodiverse environment and green spaces:** Natural environments, open spaces, biodiversity and wildlife are restored, enhanced, protected and accessible for all. There is a network of ecological corridors that connect through the villages and to the wider countryside. Space for a wide range of active and passive recreation, for all ages. Air & water quality is good, it is quieter with dark skies and tranquillity.
- 3. Safe and active travel:** A place where walking and cycling are the first choice for local journeys. There is the infrastructure to support electric cars with fewer miles travelled by vehicle. Car and bike sharing and repair. Safe routes to access amenities and the station. Welcoming streets where people connect on their journey.
- 4. Preserved heritage:** The parish's unique historic buildings are protected and enhanced. They are appreciated alongside contemporary architecture as part of our daily activities.
- 5. Connected and supported communities:** There are facilities for all needs – for health, social & wellbeing, local food produce, education, culture, retail, sport and recreation. They are inclusive spaces that connect and bring people together linked to active travel and green spaces, carparking and electric vehicle charging.
- 6. Enhanced & circular local economy:** Established local businesses are doing well and new businesses emerging. There is an increase in tourism and with more people working closer to or at home, using the local facilities and networks. The local economy is circular and thriving.

2.5. The NDP also includes a set of underlying principles:

OUR NDP PRINCIPLES – in creating a healthy, sustainable & thriving parish

	NEIGHBOURHOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Listen to residentsCarry out local researchReview published evidence of what worksSupport highest needs first as defined by local people
	SUSTAINABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Holistic approachA place making planSocial, economic & environmental sustainabilityMeasures towards net zero carbon
	COLLABORATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Inclusive & wide community involvementSteering group represent the community & make decisions togetherWork in partnership with EHDC / SDNPOpen communication
	SMART	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Specific</i> – clarity of purpose & easy to follow<i>Measurable</i> – clear what success looks like for each policy<i>Achievable & Realistic</i> policies<i>Timely</i> – right decisions at right time for B&L

2.6. The draft NDP contains 21 policies, which to influence land-use and development within the neighbourhood area, with a particular focus on the following themes:

- Sustainable development and housing: ensuring that any development (e.g. windfall) is directed to the most sustainable locations within the parish (within the adopted settlement boundaries), influencing the type of homes being delivered so that they address local need, and preparing design codes tailored to the parish to ensure that planning applications are designed to the highest standard, are sustainable and in-keeping with local character.
- Environment and green space: recognising the designated and non-designated characteristics of the natural landscape and seeking to safeguard these and better connect them where possible, to support biodiversity and movement of wildlife. In addition designating local green spaces, identifying important local views and viewpoints and protecting the dark skies enjoyed in the parish from pollution.
- Transport and movement: Supporting opportunities for active travel to reduce the reliance on more polluting forms of transport. This includes providing support for the 20-minute neighbourhood concept as championed by the Town and Country Planning Association.
- Conserving Heritage: Celebrating the rich heritage of the parish, which includes two conservation areas and numerous listed buildings, identifying non-designated heritage assets of local importance, safeguarding the parish's sunken lanes and ensuring that village centre shops and services contribute to local character.
- Community facilities: Safeguarding against the loss of existing services and facilities, including allotments, sports and recreation, medical and educational.
- Supporting the local economy: Supporting proposals that will help to retain the vital role of the village centre in Liphook, supporting local economic activity notably homeworking,

and supporting sustainable rural tourism, in line with that promoted through the South Downs Local Plan.

for SEA is triggered. Part 2 further assesses stage 8, on whether there is a likely significant impact. The screening opinion takes a 'precautionary approach' and when it is unclear as to how the Directive may be applied it is assumed that there are possible likely significant effects.

Part 1: Application of the Directive to the draft NDP

Table 1. Establishing the need for SEA by following the flowchart in Figure 1

Stage	Yes / No (Y/N)	Justification
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	NDPs are prepared by parish councils under the provision of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism act 2011. GO TO STAGE 2
2) Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	It is not a requirement for a parish to produce a NDP. However, once "made" the plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan and will be used when making decision on planning applications. GO TO STAGE 3
3) Is the PP 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 EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	Y	The NDP is being prepared for town and country planning and land use. The NDP is in conformity with the policies set out in the East Hants Joint Core Strategy. It contains a general framework for all future development consent and thus projects which could be listed in Annex II of the EIA Directive. GO TO STAGE 5
4) Will the PP, in view of its likely effects on sites require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))		NOT APPLICABLE
5) Does the PP 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)	Y	The NDP does not allocate land for a specific purpose but does show preference for the type and form of development at local level. GO TO STAGE 8
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)		NOT APPLICABLE

7) Is the PP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)		NOT APPLICABLE
8) Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	SEE TABLE 2

Part 2: Likely significant effects on the Environment

3.4. Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below, together with a commentary on whether the draft NDP would trigger the need for a full assessment.

Table 2. Assessing Likely Significant Effects (LSE) for the characteristics of plans and programmes, with regard to the following criteria

Criteria (from Annex II) of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations	East Hampshire District Council/South Downs National Park Authority Comments for SEA screening test ('is there likely to be a significant effect?')
1.a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regards to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	<p>The NDP, if adopted, will become part of the development plan for the area. It will not set a framework for other plans or policies outside of the Bramshott and Liphook NDP area. It will help inform decisions within the parish relating to development up to 2040.</p> <p>It sets out a local policy framework for development proposals. It supports the implementation of policies in the Joint Core Strategy and South Downs Local Plan, both of which have been subject to SEA.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
1. b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	<p>The NDP does not influence other plans or programmes in the Local Plan; rather it supplements them. The NDP will form part of the Development Plan for the District and will only apply to the designated Neighbourhood Area, the parish of Bramshott and Liphook.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans by their nature are locally driven and focused, providing detailed guidance to local development.</p>

Criteria (from Annex II) of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations	East Hampshire District Council/South Downs National Park Authority Comments for SEA screening test ('is there likely to be a significant effect?')
	Overall there would be no significant effect.
<p>1. c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.</p>	<p>A number of policies seek to promote sustainable development that can be considered to be in conformity with the NPPF. This is a 'basic condition'/requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan making process.</p> <p>Draft NDP policy BL4: Climate Change and Design includes support for incorporating design and environmental performance measures and standards to reduce energy consumption and climate effects. This includes the optimisation of passive solar gain, the thermal efficiency of building materials, energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation, and double glazing and on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels, ground source heating and energy generation.</p> <p>The draft plan also supports the reduction of water consumption through water re-use measures (rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and grey water recycling systems), low carbon sustainable design, the avoidance/mitigation of regulated emissions ideally using on-site energy efficiency measures and zero carbon technologies.</p> <p>In addition, it supports adequate infrastructure for electric charging points, sustainable design and construction standards, and the generation of renewable energy where appropriate.</p> <p>A number of the policies seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment and local character of the area. There are also a series of policies supporting the protection of the natural environment and its features.</p> <p>The NDP does not seek to allocate sites for development and does not promote development above and beyond that expressed in the adopted Local Plans relevant to the area.</p>

Criteria (from Annex II) of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations	East Hampshire District Council/South Downs National Park Authority Comments for SEA screening test ('is there likely to be a significant effect?')
	<p>Overall there would be no significant effect, and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in minor improvements to the local environment.</p>
<p>1. d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.</p>	<p>The parish includes sites of international, national and local biodiversity significance. These sites include parts of the Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area (and associated SSSIs) and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (e.g. Wheatsheaf Common/Liphook Golf Course, and those in the River Wey corridor). The parish also contains two conservation areas (along the River Wey and in the centre of Liphook village) as well as a variety of listed buildings within and outwith these areas.</p> <p>Part of the parish is located within the South Downs National Park, with the settlement of Liphook directly adjoining the boundary of the National Park.</p> <p>The NDP proposes policies on the location of development (to direct it within the adopted settlement boundaries), local character, design, heritage, environment, landscape, transport, employment and infrastructure which would supplement relevant Local Plan policies.</p> <p>Individually and collectively, the NDP seeks to minimise environmental problems in the area. The plan does not propose development that would give rise to environmental problems.</p> <p>The HRA for the adopted JCS noted that across the district, there is potential for urbanisation and recreational impacts on the Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area (SPA) associated with a net increase in residential development. However, the NDP is not proposing additional residential or other development. In fact the NDP policies seek to</p>

Criteria (from Annex II) of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations	East Hampshire District Council/South Downs National Park Authority Comments for SEA screening test ('is there likely to be a significant effect?')
	<p>mitigate any potential impacts on the historic and natural landscape and designated areas. Therefore whilst this issue is relevant there is very limited potential for additional impacts arising as a result of the NDP policies.</p> <p>Areas outside of the designated biodiversity sites need to be recognised and protected; habitat fragmentation has previously been identified as a concern in East Hampshire (p.12, JCS) and this is relevant to Bramshott & Liphook parish, where riparian corridors (associated with the River Wey and its tributary, the Dead Water) link Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. The NDP, in not allocating sites, will not exacerbate this issue. In contrast, the NDP includes a policy (BL5) which seeks to safeguard the network of green and blue infrastructure in the parish and, where possible enhance and better connect it.</p> <p>Noise and light pollution have previously been identified as contributing to a loss of tranquillity in the South Downs National Park (p.11, JCS). The NDP does not allocate sites and in addition, includes a policy Dark Skies (BL9), which recognises the importance of dark skies to biodiversity as well as the physical and mental wellbeing of local people. The policy supports the need for development proposals to actively mitigate any impact as a result of light pollution.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect, and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in improvements to the local environment.</p>
1. e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community (EU) legislation on the environment (for example plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	<p>Strategies relating to waste disposal or water protection, and other community legislation on the environment, are dealt with in higher tier plans which have already been tested in full. The NDP will not impact on EU legislation on the environment.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect</p>

Criteria (from Annex II) of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations	East Hampshire District Council/South Downs National Park Authority Comments for SEA screening test ('is there likely to be a significant effect?')
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected	
2. a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	<p>The NDP will provide a context and framework to guide future development within the Neighbourhood Area and will supplement adopted planning policy. It will guide development up to 2040.</p> <p>It is not seeking to allocate sites, rather it includes policies that seek to protect and improve the environment, and to minimise the effects of development on its immediate surroundings and ensure development is delivered to high levels of sustainability.</p> <p>The NDP has been prepared in conformity with the policies of the adopted Local Plan, which has itself been subject to SEA.</p> <p>No significant effects are envisaged due to the scope and duration of the NDP.</p>
2. b) The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>As above.</p> <p>No significant effects are envisaged.</p>
2. c) The transboundary nature of the effects	<p>No transboundary (international) effects with another EU member state would arise from the policies of the NDP.</p>
2. d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	<p>No risks to human health have been identified as a result of the proposed policies in the NDP. Policies relating to environmental nuisance, pollution control and noise pollution are included in higher tier planning documents.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
2. e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	<p>The designated Neighbourhood Area is about 26.4 square kilometres in size. At the last census in 2021, the population of the parish was 9,800.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans cover small geographical areas and their policies must be in general</p>

Criteria (from Annex II) of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations	East Hampshire District Council/South Downs National Park Authority Comments for SEA screening test ('is there likely to be a significant effect?')
	<p>conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. As such they contain non-strategic development plan policies to address specific local issues.</p> <p>The NDP will provide a context and framework to guide future sustainable development in the area. The majority of effects would be focused within the parish itself.</p> <p>Overall there would be no significant effect.</p>
<p>2. f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; ii) Exceeding environmental quality standards or limit values; ii) Intensive land-use <p>and</p> <p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, community or international protection status</p>	<p>The built and natural environmental designations within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Area, along with the proposed NDP policies to protect these are considered below:</p> <p>The River Wey Conservation Area is unusual insofar as its designation relates to modifications of the river to create a historic landscape that is worthy of protection. The conservation is rural in character and enjoys a rural setting. The NDP includes Policy BL13, which recognises the importance of this Conservation Area and seeks to minimise any impacts that might occur as a result of development.</p> <p>The Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, which also includes Woolmer Forest SAC and comprises four separate SSSI areas, is of international importance due to the presence of Dartford warbler, European nightjar and woodlark bird populations. Threats to these populations include recreational pressure and urbanisation effects, hydrological changes, air pollution and the introduction of invasive, non-native species. The settlements of Bramshott and Liphook lie within the buffer zones of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA. Whilst development may therefore have a significant effect on the integrity of the European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, the NDP does not seek to allocate sites. Any development would therefore come forward as</p>

Criteria (from Annex II) of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations	East Hampshire District Council/South Downs National Park Authority Comments for SEA screening test ('is there likely to be a significant effect?')
	<p>a result of the adopted Core Strategy, for which an SEA has been prepared.</p> <p>The South Downs National Park is an area with the highest status of protection in terms of national planning policy, in relation to the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, in accordance with national planning policy. The NDP does not seek to allocate sites for sites and includes a suite of policies aimed at protecting the special landscapes within the parish.</p> <p>In light of the fact that the NDP is not seeking to support development above and beyond that expressed in the adopted development plan for the area, which themselves have been subject to SEA, it is not considered that the NDP is likely to have any significant effects on local heritage assets or nature conservation interests and it is likely that the draft policies proposed will result in minor improvements to the local environment. As such, an SEA of the plan is not considered necessary.</p>

- 3.5. Based on these findings, the Council's initial conclusion is that a SEA of the Bramshott and Liphook NDP is not necessary under the SEA Directive and Regulations because it has been demonstrated that there will not be significant environmental effects as a result of the NDP.

4. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The HRA screening process

- 4.1. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required to determine if a neighbourhood plan would have a significant impact upon the integrity of nature conservation sites of international importance, ie. Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and Special Protection Areas (SPA). The principal aim of this part of the document is to 'screen' the potential of the Bramshott and Liphook NDP for its likely effect, either alone or in combination, on these sites.
- 4.2. This is a requirement under EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC7 and has been transposed into British law by Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 20108. The Directive states that any plan or project not connected or necessary to a sites management, but likely to have significant effects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. An Appropriate Assessment determines the impact that plans and projects would have on internationally important nature conservation sites.
- 4.3. The NDP must be in conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan – in this case the Joint Core Strategy (EHDC) and the South Downs Local Plan (South Downs Local Plan Authority). An Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken for the Joint Core Strategy and South Downs Local Plan policies to ensure that either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, the policies do not adversely affect European protected sites in the district.
- 4.4. This Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening report has been undertaken by East Hampshire District Council. It concerns the Bramshott and Liphook Neighbourhood Plan which has been produced by Bramshott and Liphook Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 4.5. The aim of this HRA screening report is to assess whether this NDP would, alone or in combination with other plans and policies, cause any likely significant effects on European sites.

Likely impacts of the NDP on designated sites

- 4.6. Figure 4.1 shows the map of nature designations across the district of East Hampshire as a whole. Figure 4.2 shows those located within the parish.

Nature Conservation Designations

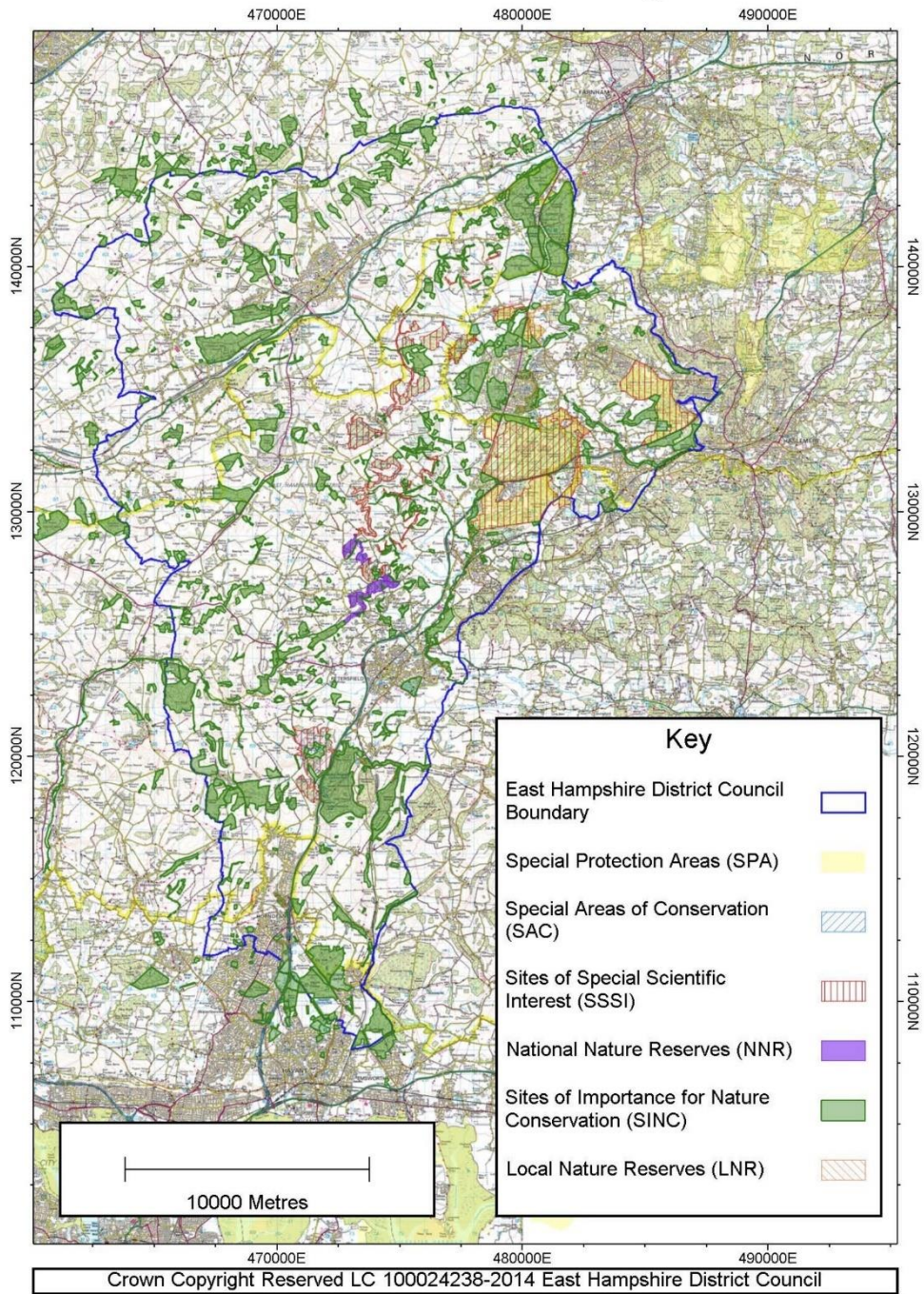


Figure 4.1: Nature Conservation Designations, East Hampshire district

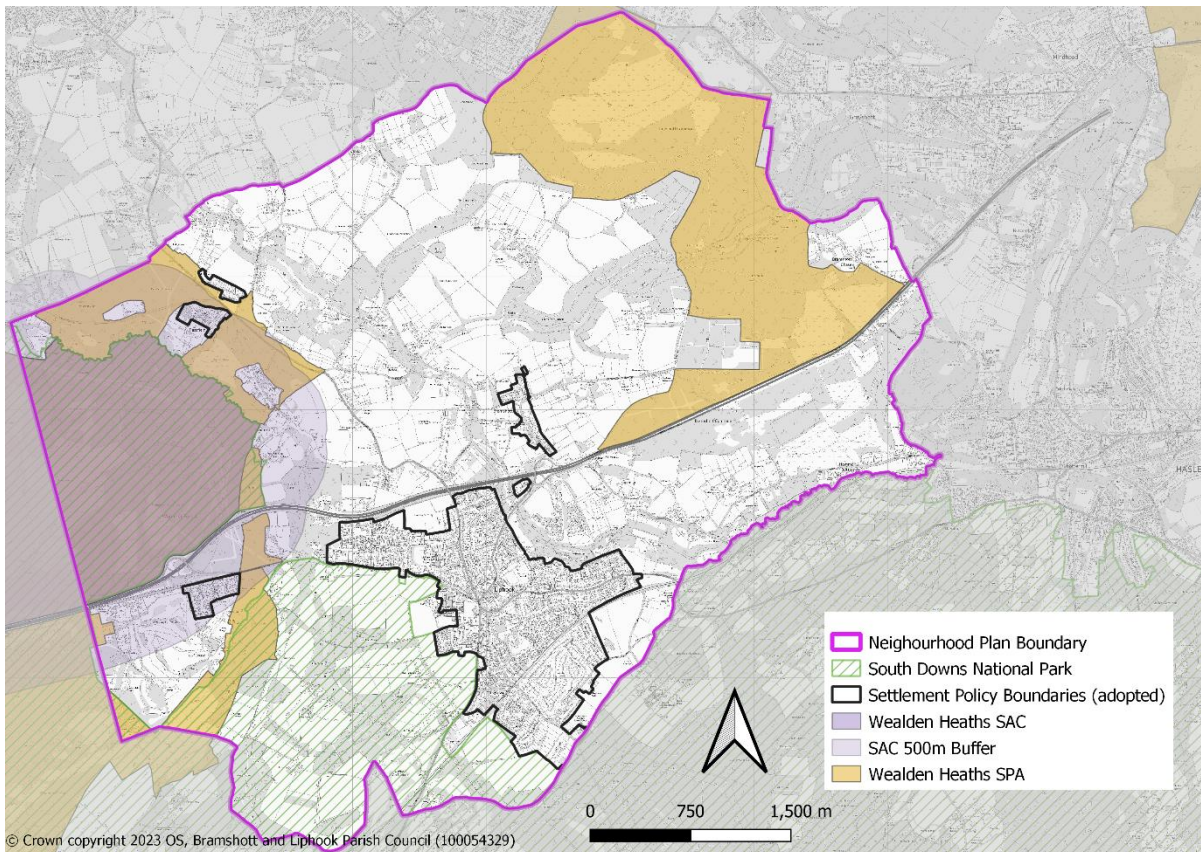


Figure 4.2: Designated sites of European importance in the neighbourhood area

4.7. Of note to the NDP is:

The Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA, which also includes Woolmer Forest SAC and comprises four separate SSSI areas:

- 4.8. This is a site of international importance due to the presence of Dartford warbler, European nightjar and woodlark bird populations. Threats to these populations include recreational pressure and urbanisation effects, hydrological changes, air pollution and the introduction of invasive, non-native species.
- 4.9. The settlements of Bramshott and Liphook lie within the buffer zones of the Wealden Heaths Phase II SPA. Development may therefore have a significant effect on the integrity of the European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- 4.10. The NDP shows preference for the type and form of development at the local level but does not allocate land for a specific purpose.
- 4.11. Plans with the potential to create in combination effects include other neighbourhood plans in the area and the adopted development plan. The adopted documents within the development plan (the Joint Core Strategy and South Downs Local Plan) have both prepared supporting HRAs.
- 4.12. [The HRA prepared for the adopted JCS states:](#)

“It has been possible to determine that significant urbanisation, air quality and water resource effects are unlikely to occur as a result of Joint Core Strategy development and that following the introduction of a policy to address the recreational pressure impacts of Whitehill & Bordon (responsible for 95% of all currently uncommitted housing within 5km of the SPA) the residual increase in recreational activity due to the small amount of development elsewhere in central

Hampshire is unlikely to lead to significant effects and thus will not require further strategic mitigation.”

4.13. [The HRA prepared for the adopted South Downs Local Plan states:](#)

“There are no recommendations made for further changes to the plan itself. However, a number of recommendations have been made for initiatives to be taken forward either strategically or via more detailed project-level HRA for individual planning applications.” (None of which relate to the Wealden Heaths SPA).

- 4.14. As the NDP is only influencing and guiding the type and form of development and directing it to the most sustainable locations – i.e. within the adopted settlement boundaries, the policies do not seek to deliver a quantum of development outside the scope of the development plan.
- 4.15. Therefore it is considered unlikely that in combination effects of this sort will be observed.
- 4.16. In conclusion, it is considered to be unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the Bramshot and Liphook Neighbourhood Plan. As such, the ‘appropriate assessment’ stage of the HRA process that ascertains the effect on integrity of the European Site does not need to be undertaken. This conclusion has been issued to Natural England for comment.

5. SEA and HRA Screening Determination

- 5.1. **SEA:** Having regard to the considerations in sections 3 and 4, East Hampshire District Council considers that the Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Development Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects on designated biodiversity, heritage and landscape assets and therefore will not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment environmental report. The NDP does not allocate sites for development, rather it seeks to influence any development that does take place within the scope of the policies of the adopted development plan (which themselves have been subject to an SEA).
- 5.2. **HRA:** Similarly, the screening assessment concludes that there is not a need for an appropriate assessment in terms of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This is because the NDP does not seek to deliver development above and beyond the scope of that contained in the adopted Joint Core Strategy and South Downs Local Plan. Rather the policies seek to influence the type, design and sustainability of any developments, whilst safeguarding the natural and historic assets of the neighbourhood area. It is considered therefore that there are unlikely to be significant effects with regards to the integrity of European sites. A full Habitat Regulations Assessment is therefore not required.
- 5.3. The screening opinion was made on **15/05/2023** and was subject to consultation with Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.
- 5.4. No response from received from the Environment Agency. Responses were received from Historic England and Natural England, who concur with the opinion that the Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Development Plan requires neither an SEA nor an HRA.
- 5.5. Natural England, in their response, noted that they are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.
- 5.6. It is confirmed that there are no significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies or proposals in the neighbourhood plan. The Plan does not seek to allocate sites, nor does it support a quantum of development as per that proposed in the adopted Local Plans relevant to the area. Many of the policies seek to actively protect areas of and against inappropriate development and acknowledge and seek to protect and extend the network of green and blue infrastructure that exists locally.
- 5.7. **To conclude, this Statement confirmed that the neighbourhood plan is unlikely to have significant impacts and therefore neither an SEA nor an HRA are required.**

Appendix 1 – Response received from Natural England

Date: 20 June 2023
Our ref: 434100
Your ref: Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Plan SEA/ HRA



Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Development Plan

East Hampshire

BY EMAIL ONLY

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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir/ Madam

Bramshott & Liphook NDP Steering Group - Bramshott and Liphook Neighbourhood Plan - SEA & HRA Screening Assessment Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 15 May 2023 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

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.

Screening Request: SEA / HRA

Natural England has no specific comments to make on this Neighbourhood Plan SEA/ HRA screening assessment consultation.

However, we refer you to the advice in the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils) are concerned, that there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in light of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is contained within the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

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

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Jack Baribeau
Sustainable Development Lead Adviser
Thames Solent Team

Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

Natural environment information sources

The [Magic](#)¹ website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information [on the](#) natural environment. A list of local record centres is available [here](#)².

Priority habitats are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)³. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here](#)⁴.

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic](#)⁵ website and also from the [LandIS website](#)⁶, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

Natural environment issues to consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#)⁷ sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](#)⁸ sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here](#)⁹), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)¹⁰. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here](#)¹¹) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has [produced](#) advice [here](#)¹² to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 171. For more information, see our publication [Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land](#)¹³.

Improving your natural environment

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development. Examples might include:

- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.

- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance on this](#) ¹⁴).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

¹ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

² <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

³ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

⁵ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

⁶ <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807247/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

⁸ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

⁹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

¹¹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

¹³ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>

¹⁴ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>

Appendix 1 – Response received from Historic England



Historic England

Louise Bevan
Bramshott and Liphook NDP Chair

Our ref: PL00733142

admin@bramshottandliphookndp.uk
by email only

19 June 2023

Dear Louise and colleagues

Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Development Plan:

- **Revised Screening Opinion for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**
- **Scoping Report (February 2020)**

Thank you for consulting Historic England about the above revised screening opinion and a scoping report dated February 2020.

Screening opinion

In terms of our area of interest, given the nature of the plan, we concur with your assessment that the plan is unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects and will simply provide additional guidance on existing policies within an adopted Development Plan Document which has already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal/SEA. As a result, we endorse the conclusion that it is not necessary to undertake SEA of this plan.

The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for an SEA is made.

Scoping report

Also, you have asked for comments on a scoping report to support, potentially, sustainability appraisal (SA) of the neighbourhood plan. We sent comments to AECOM on a scoping report for Bramshott and Liphook (dated January 2021) in February 2021, making two recommendations:

- Adding to paragraph 6.13 that the Hampshire Historic Environment Record includes numerous sites recorded within the Bramshott and Liphook Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Adding a statement within the Key Issues section that any site-specific proposals should be considered in terms of their potential for impacts on previously identified heritage assets, as well as sites of archaeological interest recorded on the Hampshire Historic Environment Record

Given the plan no longer includes sites, the second of the above points is no longer relevant. But the first comment remains valid and we reassert the recommendation to refer to the historic environment record in paragraph 6.13.

While the scoping report does not need significant changes to its heritage content, there are other points that would benefit from being updated, resources permitting, should SA be undertaken. For example (this list is indicative) the 2020 report:

- a) focuses on SEA as the prime driver for the scoping report and explains what is involved in SEA and the next stages for SEA. It states that SEA of the plan is a legal requirement
- b) refers to an emerging Local Plan that “will be adopted in summer 2021”
- c) refers to an old version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which has since been superseded;
- d) also note that more recent data are likely to be available. For the heritage section, the [National Heritage List for England](#) remains live (i.e. it evolves) and the [Heritage at Risk Register](#) is updated annually. It may be that no changes need to be made, but preferably the latest data sources should be used.

If you have any queries about any of the matters raised above or would like to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Guy Robinson, BSc, MRTPI
 Historic Environment Planning Adviser
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Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.

