

# **Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan**

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

Screening Statement - Determination under Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004

## **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

Screening Statement – Determination under Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

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## **Introduction**

- 1.1. This Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening determination has been undertaken by Base Planning and Design Ltd on behalf of Hart District Council in their duty to determine whether the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA or HRA. This screening assessment is based on draft Neighbourhood Plan policies provided December 2015 and is made on 28 January 2016.
- 1.2. Regulation 9 (1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 requires authority's to determine whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required for certain plans, policies or programmes. This statement also sets out the District Council's determination as to whether Appropriate Assessment is required under Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010.
- 1.3. Under the requirements of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive)) and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), specific types of plans that set the framework for the future development consent of projects or which require Appropriate Assessment 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. In accordance with the provisions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) (Regulation 9 (1)), the District Council must determine if a plan requires an environmental assessment. In accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), the District Council is the competent authority for determining if a plan requires Appropriate Assessment.

## **Background to the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan**

- 1.6. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) make provision for Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Forums to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. Whilst not forming part of a local authority's Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plans do form part of the Development Plan for an area as set out in Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). As such, Neighbourhood Plans are a material consideration in taking planning decisions and can contain policies on a range of issues including the allocation of sites/land for development.
- 1.7. The proposed Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan covers all of the area within the jurisdiction of Winchfield Parish Council which lies south of Hartley Wintney and west of Fleet in Hampshire. The plan area contains the settlements of Winchfield Court and Winchfield Hurst and is largely rural, characterised by a patchwork of agricultural plots and pasture bounded by hedgerows and interspersed with areas of woodland and small copses. The Basingstoke Canal lies to the south of the plan area with the M3 motorway passing through the north of the plan area and the A30 forming the northern boundary.
- 1.8. Some areas of woodland/copses are designated as ancient/semi ancient woodland and covered by Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) status. The Odiham Common with Bagwell Green & Shaw Site of Special Scientific Interest

(SSSI) has an area of 133ha and is comprised of 4 units with units 3 and 4 in the Neighbourhood Plan area. 95% of this SSSI is in favourable or unfavourable recovering status which meets the PSA target. Although part of the SSSI has been partially destroyed, this is in relation to unit 1 not units 3 or 4. Unit 1 of the Basingstoke Canal SSSI lies to the south of the plan area and is in an unfavourable declining status due to a decline in the extent of vegetation, low plant diversity and water quality issues.

- 1.9. The Hart Biodiversity Action Plan identifies priority habitats and species, which for the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan area includes Woodlands (ancient semi-natural & pasture woodland/wooded common) with associated species such as Stag Beetle and Silver Washed Fritillary. The Plan area also holds Pale Lane Fields which have been identified as a site which supports one or more notable species. The plan area is also within the Loddon/Lyde/Whitewater Catchment and Headwaters Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) which is typified by the rivers rising from chalk escarpments and flowing north across clays and sands of the Thames basin. The BOA is recognised as predominantly agricultural in character but opportunities exist to restore and enhance wet grassland, fens, woodland and heathland.
- 1.10. The plan area also contains 30 statutorily listed buildings and structures including the grade I listed Church of St Mary's built around 1150. There are also several monuments, mile and sarsen stones around the plan area as well as the stone age settlement of Bagwell Green and two areas of archaeological interest. There are however no scheduled ancient monuments. The plan area also contains the northern most tip of the grade II historic park and garden at Dogmersfield Park and part of the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area lies to the south of the plan area.
- 1.11. The proposed Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan sets out a number of policies and objectives covering a range of issues and includes the following vision:  
*'To plan a future for Winchfield of sympathetic and sustainable development, achieving managed growth with incremental supporting infrastructure that maintains the essential characteristics of this Domesday listed village.'*
- 1.12. There are proposed plan objectives and policies for housing, character of the village, conservation, history and roads as summarised below:  
Housing - Ensure that new housing respects the character of the village and existing buildings in density, size, scale and quality with growth managed by infill or small scale development (5-7 dwellings) which may be accommodated outside settlement boundaries. Affordable housing should be offered to those with a local connection first. Plan sets out an unmet housing need of 50 dwellings, but not included within policies.  
Character of the Village – Ensure new developments blend into the village with the preservation of rural views and views in the vicinity of sites of special interest with retention of hedgerows, trees and ancient woodland. Infrastructure to support incremental growth and local gaps between Winchfield Parish settlements and neighbouring villages retained.  
Conservation – Retain and protect ancient woodland and hedgerows with natural boundaries of native species and wetland areas providing essential habitat for wildlife. Resist developments with adverse effects on ecology, flood risk and aquifers.  
History – Preserve historic buildings, historic environment and heritage sites including the Victorian buildings at Winchfield station.

Roads – Objective aims to preserve network of rural lanes with traffic management schemes introduced where appropriate and retention of ancient trees and hedgerows lining the lanes. Maintain footpath and bridleway connections.

- 1.13 The Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan also contains several policies called ‘watch points’ which includes protection of assets of community value, potential use of CIL receipts and traffic management with respect to speed limits and signage.
- 1.14 The Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land or sites for development. The plan does set out a residual unmet housing need of 50 dwellings for the plan area. However, this figure is not included in any policy and is not explicitly referred to as a target, but is instead referred to in the supporting text which states ‘*Therefore the residual housing number of 50 homes is seen by Winchfield as best delivered evenly over the full plan period...*’. As such, the 50 dwellings figure is not considered to be a target per se, but is instead a guide.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 1.15 Under separate legislation (the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated Regulations), local authority’s are required to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for their Local Plan documents. This considers the social and economic impacts of a plan as well as the environmental impacts. Neighbourhood Plans are not however covered by this requirement and as such a Sustainability Appraisal is not required.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) – Screening**

- 1.16 The need to undertake an Appropriate Assessment as part of an HRA is set out within the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and transposed into British Law by Regulation 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). The Appropriate Assessment stage of HRA is only required should the preliminary screening assessment not be able to rule out likely significant effects.
- 1.17 The European Habitats Directive requires that any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on a European site must be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 sets out a general presumption that Neighbourhood Plans are not likely to have a significant effect on European sites. Schedule 2 also amends the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) so as to apply its provisions to neighbourhood development orders and neighbourhood plans. It also inserts new regulation 78A which provides that a neighbourhood development order may not grant planning permission for development which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site.
- 1.18 Whilst Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 set out a general presumption that an HRA is unlikely to be required, it is still necessary to carry out a screening assessment.
- 1.19 The Habitats Directive states that any plan or project not connected to or necessary for a site’s management, but likely to have significant effects thereon shall be subject to appropriate assessment. There are four distinct stages in HRA namely: -

**Step 1:** Screening – Identification of likely impacts on a European site either alone or in combination with other plans/projects and consideration of whether these are significant. This can include the consideration of avoidance measures.

**Step 2:** Appropriate Assessment – consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European Site whether alone or in combination with other plans or projects with respect to the sites structure, function and conservation objectives. Where there are significant effects, step 2 should consider potential mitigation measures.

**Step 3:** Assessment of Alternative Solutions – Assessing alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the plan/project which avoid impacts; and

**Step 4:** Assessment of Compensatory Measures – Identification of compensatory measures should impact not be avoided and no alternative solutions exist and an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) deems that a project should proceed.

- 1.20 Should step 1 reveal that significant effects are likely or effect cannot be discounted because of uncertainty, then it is necessary to move onto step 2: Appropriate Assessment. If step 2 cannot rule out significant effect even with mitigation, then the process moves onto step 3 and finally step 4 if no alternative solutions arise.

### **Step 1 - Screening**

- 1.21 There are four stages to consider in a screening exercise: -

Stage 1: Determining whether the plan/project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site;

Stage 2: Describing the plan/project and description of other plan/projects that have the potential for in-combination impacts;

Stage 3: Identifying potential effects on the European site(s); and

Stage 4: Assessing the significance of any effects

#### **Stage 1**

- 1.22 It can be determined that the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site.

#### **Stage 2**

- 1.23 Information about the Neighbourhood Plan can be found in paragraphs 1.6 to 1.14 of this screening assessment. Table 1-1 lists those other plans and projects, which may have in-combination impacts.

**Table 1-1: Other Key Plans/Projects**

Plan/Project	
	<p><b>National Planning Policy Framework (2012):</b> High level national planning policy covering topics such as housing, economy, employment, retail as well as biodiversity, flood risk and heritage.</p> <p><b>South East Plan 2009:</b> Saved Policy NRM6 sets out protection for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.</p> <p><b>Hart Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and First Alterations:</b> Sets policies for the consideration of development with most policies 'saved' from 2007 onwards.</p> <p><b>Other Local Authority Local Plans within 5km or adjoining Thames Basin Heaths SPA:</b> Housing target for areas around SPA set at 132,560 in the revoked South East Plan. Whilst these figures are revoked, they serve as a guide until Local Plans have been fully established post revocation.</p> <p><b>Large Scale Projects within 7km or adjoining the Thames Basin Heaths SPA:</b> Large scale projects within 7km are listed in Table 1-2, however housing numbers associated with these are subsumed in the consideration of 'Other Local Authority Local Plans' above.</p> <p><b>Thames Basin Heaths Joint Delivery Framework 2009:</b> Sets out the agreed Framework regarding the approach and standards for avoiding significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.</p> <p><b>Environment Agency, Thames River Basin Management Plan (2009) &amp; emerging update (2015):</b> Sets out actions to improve water quality within the Thames Catchment. RBMP identifies unit R10 (Whitewater) which lies just to the west of the plan area in 'moderate' to achieve good status by 2027.</p> <p><b>Environment Agency, Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009):</b> Aim is to promote more sustainable approaches to managing flood risk. Will be delivered through a combination of different approaches.</p> <p><b>Environment Agency, River Loddon Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (2012):</b> identifies the upper Loddon as having water available for licencing, but this is overridden by the flow requirements of the Thames, which changes the status to 'Water not available for licencing'. However, groundwater licences which do not have a direct impact and immediate impact on river flow may be permitted all year.</p> <p><b>Environment Agency, Water Resources Strategy: Regional Action Plan for Thames Region (2009):</b> Key priorities for Thames region include ensuring sufficient water resources are available, making water available in over-abstracted catchments and reducing demand.</p> <p><b>Hart Biodiversity Action Plan (2012):</b> Action plan aims to conserve and enhance current resource and identify areas for biodiversity improvement. Includes 5 priority habitat types and associated species.</p>

**Table 1-2: Proposed/Committed Major Schemes within 7km of SPA**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>No. Dwellings</b>
Princess Royal Barracks	Deepcut, Surrey	1,200
Aldershot Urban Extension	Aldershot, Hants	3,850
Bracknell Town Centre	Bracknell, Berks	1,000
Land at Amen Corner (south)	Binfield, Berks	725
Land North of Whitegrove	Warfield, Berks	2,200
Land at Transport Research Laboratory	Crowthorne, Berks	1,000
Arborfield Garrison	Arborfield, Berks	3,500
South of Wokingham	Wokingham, Berks	2,000
North of Wokingham	Wokingham, Berks	2,000
South of M4	Shinfield/Spencers Wood, Berks	3,500
Queen Elizabeth Barracks	Church Crookham, Hants	1,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>21,975</b>

### Stage 3

- 1.24 Information regarding the European site(s) screened and the likely effects that may arise due to implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan can be found in Tables 1-3 and 1-4. All other European Sites were screened out of this assessment at an early stage as it was considered that their distance from the Neighbourhood Plan area coupled with the nature and content of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan meant that there is no pathway or mechanism which would give rise to significant effect.

**Table 1-3: Details of Thames Basin Heaths SPA and Potential Effects Thereon**

European site:	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).
Site description:	The Thames Basin Heaths SPA was proposed in October 2000, and full SPA status was approved on 9 March 2005. It covers an area of some 8,274 ha, consisting of 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) scattered from Surrey, to Berkshire in the north, through to Hampshire in the west. The habitat consists of both dry and wet heathland, mire, oak, birch acid woodland, gorse scrub and acid grassland with areas of rotational conifer plantation.
Relevant international nature conservation features:	The SPA is of international importance as a habitat for heathland birds: nightjar ( <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> ), woodlark ( <i>Lullula arborea</i> ) and Dartford warbler ( <i>Sylvia undata</i> ). It is of European importance because the site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used by 1% or more of the Great Britain population of a species listed in Annex I.
Environmental conditions which support the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate management</li> <li>• Management of disturbance during breeding season (March to July)</li> <li>• Minimal air pollution</li> <li>• Absence or control of urbanisation effects, such as fires and introduction of invasive non-native species</li> <li>• Maintenance of appropriate water levels</li> <li>• Maintenance of water quality</li> </ul>
Potential effects arising from the Neighbourhood Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indirect effects arising from disturbance due to recreational activity on the SPA and potential for direct urbanising impacts.</li> </ul>

## Stage 4

1.25 The consideration of potential effects are set out in Table 1-4.

**Table 1-4: Assessment of Potential Effects**

<p>Indirect effect from recreational disturbance and urbanisation.</p>	<p>The likely effects of recreational disturbance have been summarised in the Underhill-Day study for Natural England and RSPB (2005); this provides a review of the urban effects on lowland heaths and their wildlife. The main issues relating to the conservation objectives and the integrity of the SPA as a whole are: fragmentation, disturbance, fires, cats, dogs (as a result of nest disturbance and enrichment), prevention of management, off-roading, vandalism and trampling.</p> <p>Natural England has advised that recreational pressure, as a result of increased residential development within 5km of the SPA, is having a significant adverse impact on the Annex I bird species. Woodlark and Nightjar are ground nesting and Dartford Warblers nest close to the ground. They are therefore sensitive to disturbance, particularly from dogs, but also from walkers, and cyclists etc. They are, in addition, vulnerable to other effects of urbanisation, in particular predation by cats.</p> <p>Joint work involving Natural England and the authorities affected by the SPA have agreed a mechanism to avoid impacts to the SPA from recreational activities in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management &amp; Monitoring (SAMM) and from the impacts of urbanisation by not allowing any net additional dwellings within 400m of the SPA.</p> <p>The Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any land or sites for net additional dwellings within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and no part of the plan area lies within the 400m zone. Whilst the plan does set out a residual unmet housing need number of 50 dwellings, this is not included within any of the policies as a housing target, but could be seen as a guide. Whilst there are no allocations of land or sites, there is therefore, identified potential in the draft Plan for an additional 50 dwellings during the plan period within 5km of the SPA. Saved Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan sets out the concept for SANG as avoidance measures for net additional dwellings within 5km of the SPA. Hart District Council has also adopted a SPA Interim Avoidance Strategy in 2010 which sets out the requirement for developments proposing net additional dwellings within 5km of the SPA to avoid impacts through the use of SANG and SAMM.</p>
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	<p>Whilst there is a potential pathway for indirect recreational impacts due to an additional 50 dwellings within 5km of the SPA, both saved Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan and Hart's Interim Avoidance Strategy set out the requirement for avoidance measures. As such, should a scheme for net additional dwellings come forward within the Neighbourhood Plan area there is already a mechanism in place to avoid impacts.</p> <p>Further, proposed Policy C1 of the Neighbourhood Plan sets out a strong emphasis on protecting ecology which includes the SPA 5km zone of influence. Policy C1 and NRM6 of the South East Plan will both form part of the Development Plan and with the Interim Avoidance Strategy, it will be clear to a decision maker, that any net additional dwelling within the 5km zone of influence will require avoidance measures.</p> <p>As such, in-combination with other plans and projects it is considered, at the time of undertaking this assessment, that the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan will not give rise to likely significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA either alone or in-combination.</p>
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- 1.26 It is the conclusion of this HRA that following a screening assessment it can be ascertained, in light of the information available at the time of assessment that the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan **will not** give rise to significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA either alone or in-combination with other plans and/or projects. Given the findings of the screening assessment it is considered that a full appropriate assessment is not required.

### The SEA Screening Process

- 1.27 The process for determining whether or not an SEA is required is called 'screening'. For some types of plan or programme SEA is mandatory and includes the following:
- Plans which are prepared for town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive; or
  - Plans which have been determined to require an assessment under the Habitats Directive (this has already been screened out as set out in paragraphs 1.16 to 1.26 of this screening assessment).
- 1.28 However, the main determining factor when considering whether a plan or programme requires SEA is whether it will have significant environmental effects.

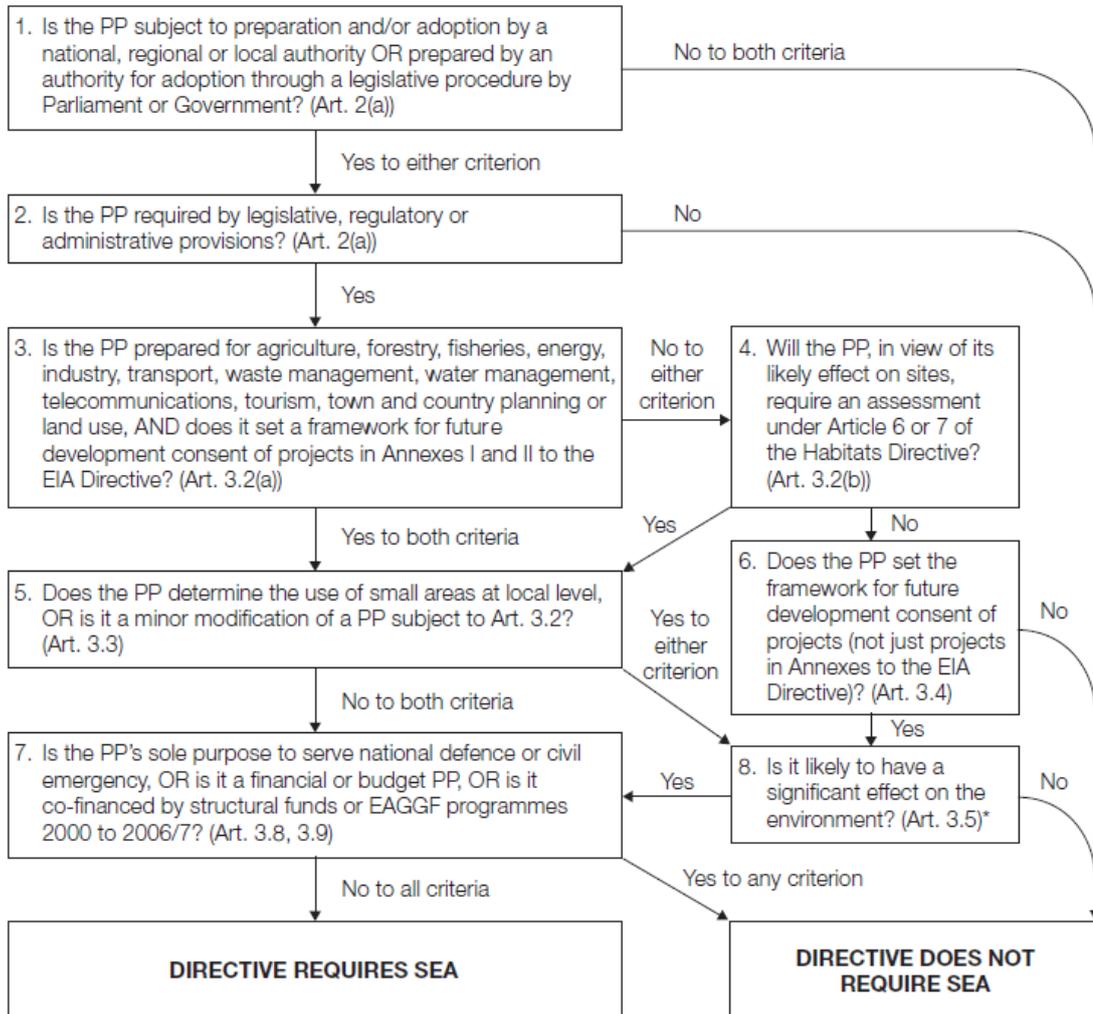
- 1.29 Within 28 days of making its determination, the determining authority must publish a statement, such as this one, setting out its decision. If it is determined that an SEA is not required, the statement must include the reasons for this.
- 1.30 This Screening Report sets out the Council's determination under Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 on whether or not SEA is required for the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan. The District Council must consult with the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England) and take their views into account before issuing a final determination. This is based on a two-step approach, the first of which is to assess the plan against the flowchart as set out in government guidance *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*<sup>1</sup>. The flow chart is shown in Figure 1.

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<sup>1</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Process (2005) ODPM. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

**Figure 1:**

This diagram is intended as a guide to the criteria for application of the Directive to plans and programmes (PPs). It has no legal status.



\*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

- 1.31 The second step is to consider whether the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan will have significant environmental effects when considered against the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations. The findings of step one and step two are shown in Tables 1-5 and 1-6.

**Table 1-5: SEA Screening Step 1**

Stage in Flowchart	Y/N	Reason
<p>1. Is the plan/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? (Article 2(a))</p>	Y	<p>The provision to prepare and adopt Neighbourhood Plans is given by the Town &amp; Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The Neighbourhood Plan will be prepared by Winchfield Parish Council and 'made' by Hart District Council. The preparation and adoption procedure is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and The Neighbourhood Planning (referendums) Regulations 2012. <b>Move to Stage 2</b></p>
<p>2. Is the plan/programme required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))</p>	N	<p>There is no mandatory requirement to prepare and/or adopt Neighbourhood Plans. However, if the plan is 'made' it will form part of the Development Plan for Hart and therefore the possibility of significant effects should be considered. <b>Move to Stage 3</b></p>
<p>3. Is the plan/programme 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? (Article 3.2(a))</p>	N	<p>The Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town &amp; country planning and/or land use. It does not propose sites or land for allocation and as such does not set the framework for future development consent of projects under Annexes I or II of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive. The plan sets out that should sites come forward these will either be infill or small scale (5-7 units), which are not projects of a scale requiring EIA under either Annexes I or II. <b>Move to Stage 4</b></p>

Stage in Flowchart	Y/N	Reason
4. Will the plan/programme, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Article 3.2(b))	N	HRA screening undertaken in paragraphs 1.16 to 1.26 of this assessment has determined that Appropriate Assessment is not required. <b>Move to Stage 6</b>
5. Does the plan/programme determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Article 3.3)	N/A	<b>Not Applicable</b>
6. Does the plan/programme set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Article 3.4)	Y	The Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan does contain policies which could set the framework for projects outside of the EIA Directive for example with respect to allowing sites for infill or small scale development. <b>Move to Stage 8</b>
7. Is the plan/programme's sole purpose to serve 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? (Article 3.8, 3.9)	N/A	<b>Not Applicable</b>
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Article 3.5)	N	Effects on the environment and whether these are significant are considered in Table 1-6. <b>If Significant Effects likely move to Stage 7</b>

**Table 1-6: SEA Screening Step 2**

<b>Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)</b>		<b>Response</b>
<b>Characteristics of the plan or programme</b>		<b>Significant Effect?</b>
(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 Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies against which development proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be considered. The policies are generally design-based or seek the protection and enhancement of the existing character and context of the area including its natural, built and historic environments. The plan does not allocate any sites or land for future development consents but does have a guide of 50 dwellings over the plan period. However, the 50 dwelling figure is not included in any policy and the policies themselves set out how a decision maker should react to development proposals rather than setting a framework for development projects.	N
(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	The Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan for Hart District Council and will sit alongside the saved policies from the Local Plan 1996-2006 (Replacement) and First Alterations. The saved policies of the Local Plan have informed the preparation of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan policies. The plan will also sit alongside the new Hart Local Plan once adopted. Whilst in preparing the new Local Plan, regard will be had to progress on emerging or adopted Neighbourhood Plans, it is the Local Plan that will identify the strategic approach to new development in the District.	N
(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The Neighbourhood Plan proposes policies to protect and enhance environmental assets or features and seeks to promote sustainable development. As such, the plan should have positive effects on the built and natural environment including its local landscape character, heritage and local biodiversity interests such as designated sites, priority habitats and the Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA).	N

<b>Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)</b>	<b>Response</b>	
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	Environmental problems include potential recreational or urbanising impacts to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and the unfavourable declining status of the Basingstoke Canal SSSI. Paragraphs 1.16 to 1.26 of this assessment sets out the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA in terms of recreational or urbanising effects and has determined no significant effects. The Neighbourhood Plan also proposes Policy C1 which seeks to protect local ecology and wetlands which should generally have a positive effect on the Basingstoke Canal SSSI.	N
(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).	The Neighbourhood Plan contains policies which seek to protect and/or enhance the natural and built environment, including biodiversity/ecology, heritage assets, rural views and the character of the area and landscape. As such, the Neighbourhood Plan will aid in the implementation of other EU legislation with respect to biodiversity, landscape and the historic environment.	N
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected</b>		
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	The Neighbourhood Plan will not in itself set out or bring forward development plans or projects as it is largely interested in the protection and/or enhancement of the character and context of the area and its built and natural environment. Although the plan does contain a figure of 50 dwellings as a guide, given the set of policies seeking protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environments and the scale of development proposed over the plan period, it is considered that effects are likely to be positive and last for the duration of the plan period and beyond.	N
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects	The Neighbourhood Plan proposes policies for the protection and/or enhancement of the built, historic and natural environment and others which are largely design orientated or seek to ensure affordable homes are offered to those with a local connection to the area first. In combination with the Historic Parks &	N

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response	
	Gardens designation, SSSI and Site of Importance for Nature Conservation designations, priority habitats in the Hart BAP and saved policies from the Hart Local Plan 1996-2006 (Replacement) and First Alterations as well as saved Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan and Hart's Interim Avoidance Strategy that any cumulative effects are likely to be positive with respect to the character of the area, landscape, biodiversity features and its built and natural environment.	
(c) The transboundary nature of the effects	Given the geographic scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that no transboundary effects will arise.	N
(d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	None.	N
(e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The Neighbourhood Plan will cover the whole of the geographic area of the Parish of Winchfield in Hampshire which covers an area of around 700ha with a population at the time of the 2011 Census of 664 and 242 households. Given the local scale and nature of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that effects will only be limited in magnitude of will have positive effects.	N
(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; iii) Intensive land-use.	Given the nature of the Neighbourhood Plan:  i) The Neighbourhood Plan area contains two SSSIs , Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and around 30 listed buildings/structures and part of a grade II historic park & garden. The area is rural in character and contains features such as hedgerows, woodland copses, rights of way and agricultural uses. However, the plan proposes objectives and policies for the protection and enhancement of its historic and natural environment.  ii) Basingstoke Canal SSSI not meeting PSA target of 95% of the SSSI in favourable or	N

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response	
	unfavourable recovering condition, with unit 1 in an unfavourable declining status. However, proposed Policy C1 of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect ecology and wetlands which should have positive effects for the Basingstoke Canal SSSI. iii) None identified.	
(g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The effects on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA are dealt with in (d) above. In any event, an HRA screening assessment has determined no significant effects.	N
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>The Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects and as such an SEA is not required.</b>	

1.32 On the basis of the Screening process it is determined that the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan does not require an SEA under the SEA Directive and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004). This is because: -

- The Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan does not set the framework for future consents under the EIA Directive;
- An appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive is not required;
- There is no pathway or mechanism for significant environmental effects to arise as the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate development. Although the plan has regard to a housing need figure of 50 dwellings, this is not set out in any policy and in any event the Plan includes a range of policies which seeks to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.

## Conclusions

1.33 On the basis of the above, it is concluded that the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan will not have significant effects in relation to any of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, and therefore does not need to be subject to a SEA Report. Similarly, the screening assessment concludes that no likely significant effects are likely to occur with regards to the integrity of any European sites and a full HRA is not required.

- 1.34 From 16 December 2015 to 22 January 2016 a consultation was undertaken on this screening report with Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. Consultation responses were received from all three bodies and on the basis of the information provided, all three consultation bodies agreed with the draft Screening conclusions.