

# **Fleet Neighbourhood Plan**

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

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

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

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

26 April 2018

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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 Fleet Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA or HRA. This screening assessment is based on the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan dated March 2018.
- 1.2. Regulation 9 (1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 requires authorities 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 Fleet Neighbourhood Plan

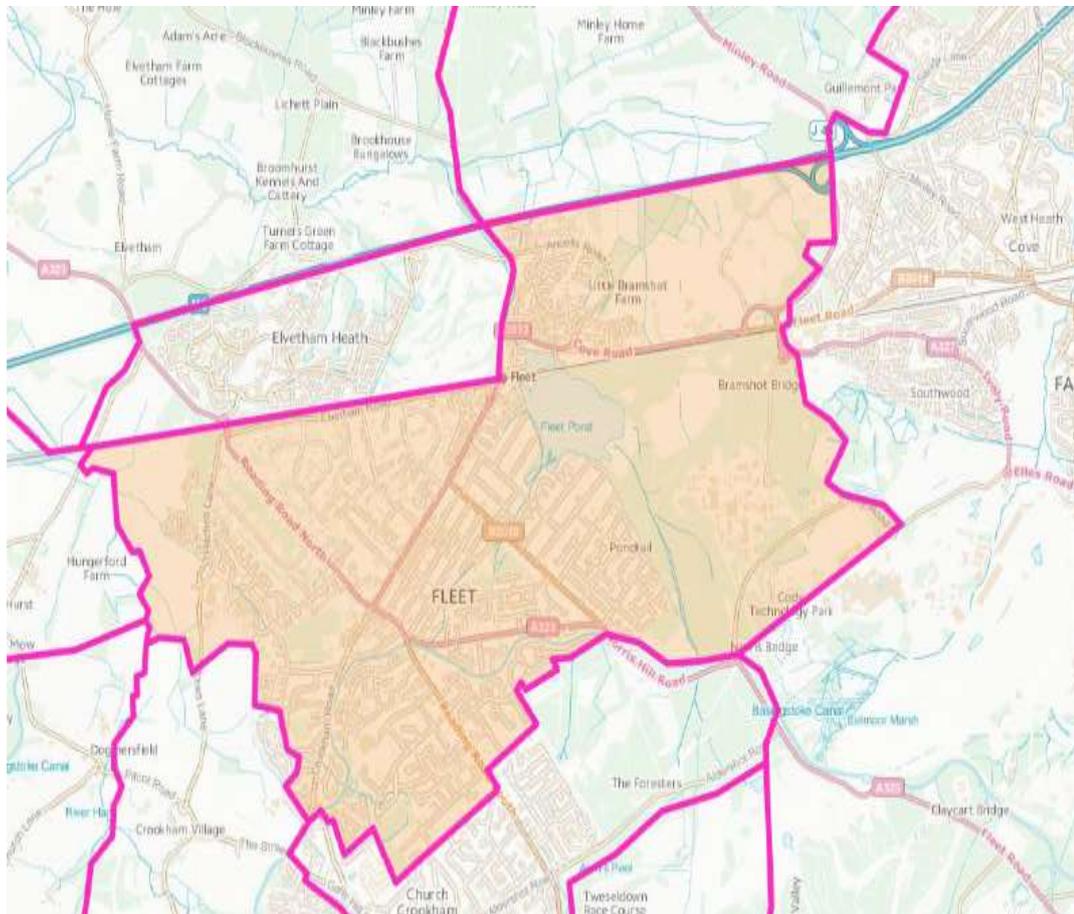
- 1.6. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) make provision for Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Forums to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. Whilst not forming part of a local authority's Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plans do form part of the Development Plan for an area as set out in Section 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 Fleet Neighbourhood Plan covers all of the area within the jurisdiction of Fleet Town Council<sup>1</sup> which lies southeast of Hartley Wintney and west of Farnborough in Hampshire. The plan area contains the settlement of Fleet and in the west is largely urban, characterised by a mix of residential and commercial development including Fleet Town Centre and Ancells Business Park, however the area is interspersed with areas of open space, incidental amenity and small wooded areas. The eastern side of the area is more rural in character around Fleet Pond and up to the boundary with Rushmoor Borough Council, although the large brownfield site known as Pyestock lies between Fleet and Farnborough.

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<sup>1</sup> Fleet Town Council – Statement of Area Designation and Map. Available at: <http://www.hart.gov.uk/fleet>

- 1.8. Part of the M3 motorway forms the northern most boundary of the plan area and includes the westbound slip-off at junction 4a. A plan of the designated area is shown in Plan 1-1.

**Plan 1-1: Map of the Designated Area for the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan**



- 1.9. Two areas of woodland/copses are designated as ancient/semi ancient woodland at Ancells Copse and Bramshot Copse in the north east of the neighbourhood boundary, both of which are also partly covered by Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) status. The Fleet Pond and part of the Foxlease & Ancells Meadow Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) also lie in the north east of the plan area. Fleet Pond is also designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and has an area of around 48ha comprising 2 units. Both units are in an unfavourable recovering status which meets the PSA target of 95% to be within favourable or unfavourable recovering status. Units 1, 6, 7 and 8 of the Foxlease & Ancells Meadow SSSI cover some 48.3ha and are in either a favourable or unfavourable recovering status, meeting the PSA target.
- 1.10. Just to the south east of the plan area lies the Bourley & Long Valley SSSI which also forms part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). The SSSI covers some 823ha with 96% in favourable or unfavourable recovering status meeting the PSA target. However unit 4 is in an unfavourable declining status, primarily due to areas bare of vegetation expanding with areas for Woodlark and Nightjar declining.

- 1.11. Running through the centre of the Plan area is the Basingstoke Canal SSSI, with the unit running through Fleet in an unfavourable declining status. This is primarily due to low plant diversity and poor water quality.
- 1.12. The Hart Biodiversity Action Plan identifies priority habitats and species, a number of which fall within the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan area including Woodlands (ancient semi-natural & pasture woodland/wooded common), Heathland, Unimproved grassland and Fens & Flushes. Associated species include Stag Beetle, Silver Washed Fritillary, Skylark, Dartford Warbler, Woodlark and Nightjar. Species found in urban areas include bats, hedgehogs, House Sparrows and common amphibians. The Plan area also covers Pyestock and Southwood which have been identified as sites which supports one or more notable species.
- 1.13. The Plan area is within the Thames Basin Heaths Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) which is typified by heathland, woodland, mire, scrub and grassland.
- 1.14. From a heritage perspective, the Plan area contains 2 statutorily listed buildings and structures, namely the grade II\* listed Church of All Saints and grade II Great Bramshot Farmhouse. There are no scheduled ancient monuments or registered parks and gardens but part of the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area runs through the Plan area and the North Fleet Conservation Area lies in the north west of the area.
- 1.15. The Fleet Neighbourhood Pre-Submission Plan dated March 2018 sets out the vision for the area of Fleet which is to:-  
*'Create an accessible, sustainable, green town with an active population and a vibrant business, cultural and community focus'*
- 1.16 The Pre-Submission Plan also contains a number of objectives which are set out below:
- To create a vibrant, modern Civic Quarter in our town centre that will be fit to serve our expanding population and act as a key attractor for visitors.
  - To ensure that development sites within the town are planned and built in such a way as to support the vitality of the town centre.
  - To protect and improve the unique green character of Fleet, with its open space and parks, to ensure that its verdant arterial routes are preserved for the future, and new cycle networks link the town's community assets.
  - To make sure that the height and scale of any new development fits within its surroundings and compliments and enhances the existing townscape.
- 1.17 The Fleet Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan dated March 2018 contains a number of policies which support regeneration schemes within Fleet Town Centre and identifies 6 areas or zones where this should take place. Draft Policies 1-9 seek to guide development within these areas. The policies set out the type of development expected with a range of town centre uses including retail, community, cultural and potential for residential development. However, the policies do not set out the quantum of development required rather, they are a set of guiding principles.
- 1.18 The Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan also contains policies to guide the design of development, enhancing the historic environment including the Basingstoke Canal and

North Fleet Conservation Areas as well as protection of Local Green Spaces and the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).

- 1.19 The current Hart Local Plan 1996-2006 contains policies F1-F11 which guides development within Fleet Town Centre. The Hart Local Plan Strategy & Sites 2016-2032 Proposed Submission contains Policy ED5 which sets out the principles for development within Fleet Town Centre, but again does not set out a quantum of development expected.
- 1.20 The Proposed Submission Local Plan also identifies the Waterfront Business Park in Fleet as a Strategic Employment Area and Ancells Business Park as a locally important employment area in Draft Policy ED2. However these set out the guiding principles for development within these areas and again do not set out a quantum of development expected. The Proposed Submission Local Plan allocates a new village within the Neighbourhood Plan area at Hartland Village, however, the plan does not set out a housing requirement for the Fleet Neighbourhood Area and as such it will be the Local Plan allocating the site not the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.21 The Hart Proposed Submission Plan has been the subject of Sustainability Appraisal (including the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment) as well as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 1.22 Under separate legislation (the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated Regulations), a local authority is 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**

- 1.23 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.
- 1.24 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.
- 1.25 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.

1.26 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.

1.27 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**

1.28 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**

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

#### **Stage 2**

1.30 Information about the Neighbourhood Plan can be found in paragraphs 1.6 to 1.18 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**

<p><b>Plan/ Project</b></p>	<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>Hart Local Plan 2016-2032 Proposed Submission:</b> Sets policies for the consideration of development for the period 2016-2032.</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 District Management Plan (2015):</b> Sets out actions to improve water quality, with the Neighbourhood Plan area falling within the river Loddon catchment. Future aims include improving River Whitewater structures and habitat to improve the status for fish in the River Whitewater and to encourage sustainable development for the water environment to aid climate change adaptation and mitigation.</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>
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**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
Land to the North of London Road	Hook, Hants	550
Edenbrook, Hitches Lane	Fleet, Hants	550
Land at Watery Lane	Church Crookham, Hants	300
Hartland Village		1,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>24,875</b>

### Stage 3

- 1.31 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, 1-4 and 1-5. 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>

**Table 1-4: Details of Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Cobham Common SAC and Potential Effects Thereon**

International site:	Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Cobham Common Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
Site description:	The Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham Common SAC was proposed in January 1996 and designated in April 2005. It covers an area of some 5,138 ha and comprises 4 SSSI units and habitat containing predominantly dry and wet heaths with coniferous woodland, bogs, marshes and inland water bodies.

Relevant international nature conservation features:	<p>The SAC is of international importance for Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> for which it is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom; and</p> <p>European dry heaths for which it is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom; and</p> <p>Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> for which it is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom.</p>
Environmental Conditions which Support the Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate management;</li> <li>• Managed recreational pressure;</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>• Effect on provision of SANG and therefore indirect effect from recreational disturbance on the SPA and SAC.</li> </ul>

#### Stage 4

1.32 The consideration of potential effects are set out in Table 1-5.

**Table 1-5: Assessment of Potential Effects**

Indirect effect from recreational disturbance and urbanisation.	<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/SAC, 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>
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	<p>Joint work involving Natural England and the authorities affected by the SPA/SAC have agreed a mechanism to avoid impacts to the SPA/SAC 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 Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan does not specifically allocate any specific land or sites for net additional dwellings within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. However draft Policies 1-3, 6 &amp; 7 set out the potential for residential development within Fleet Town Centre, although none of these areas lie within 400m of the TBH SPA.</p> <p>There is therefore the possibility of additional dwellings coming forward over 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 whilst holding a presumption against net additional dwellings within 400m. 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. The Hart Local Plan 2016-2032 Proposed Submission also contains policy NBE4 which sets out protection for the TBH SPA including that residential development within 5km of the SPA must mitigate their impact through provision of SANG &amp; SAMM and that additional dwellings within 400m of the SPA will not be permitted unless an appropriate assessment finds 'no likely significant effect. Policy NBE4 also sets out the requirements for mitigation for sites of 50+ units within 5-7km of the SPA.</p> <p>On top of this the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan contains policy 17 which sets out protection for SPA and reiterates the mitigation required to avoid impact.</p> <p>Whilst there is a potential pathway for indirect recreational impacts due to the likelihood of additional 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 well as the presumption against net additional dwellings in the 400m zone. This will be strengthened on adoption of Policy NBE4 of the Hart Local Plan 2016-2032 and on adoption of the</p>
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	<p>Neighbourhood Plan given the inclusion of Policy 17. As such, should a scheme for net additional dwellings come forward within the Neighbourhood Plan area there will be mechanisms in place to avoid impacts. The protection of the TBH SPA through these policies will also extend to the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Common SAC given that the SAC designation is also covered by the TBH SPA for those areas within 5km of the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>As such, in-combination with other plans and projects it is considered, at the time of undertaking this assessment, that the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan will not give rise to likely significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA or the Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Common SAC either alone or in-combination given the raft of policies which will form part of the Development Plan for Fleet which protect the SPA and require mitigation.</p>
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- 1.33 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 Fleet Neighbourhood Plan **will not** give rise to significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA or Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Common SAC 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.

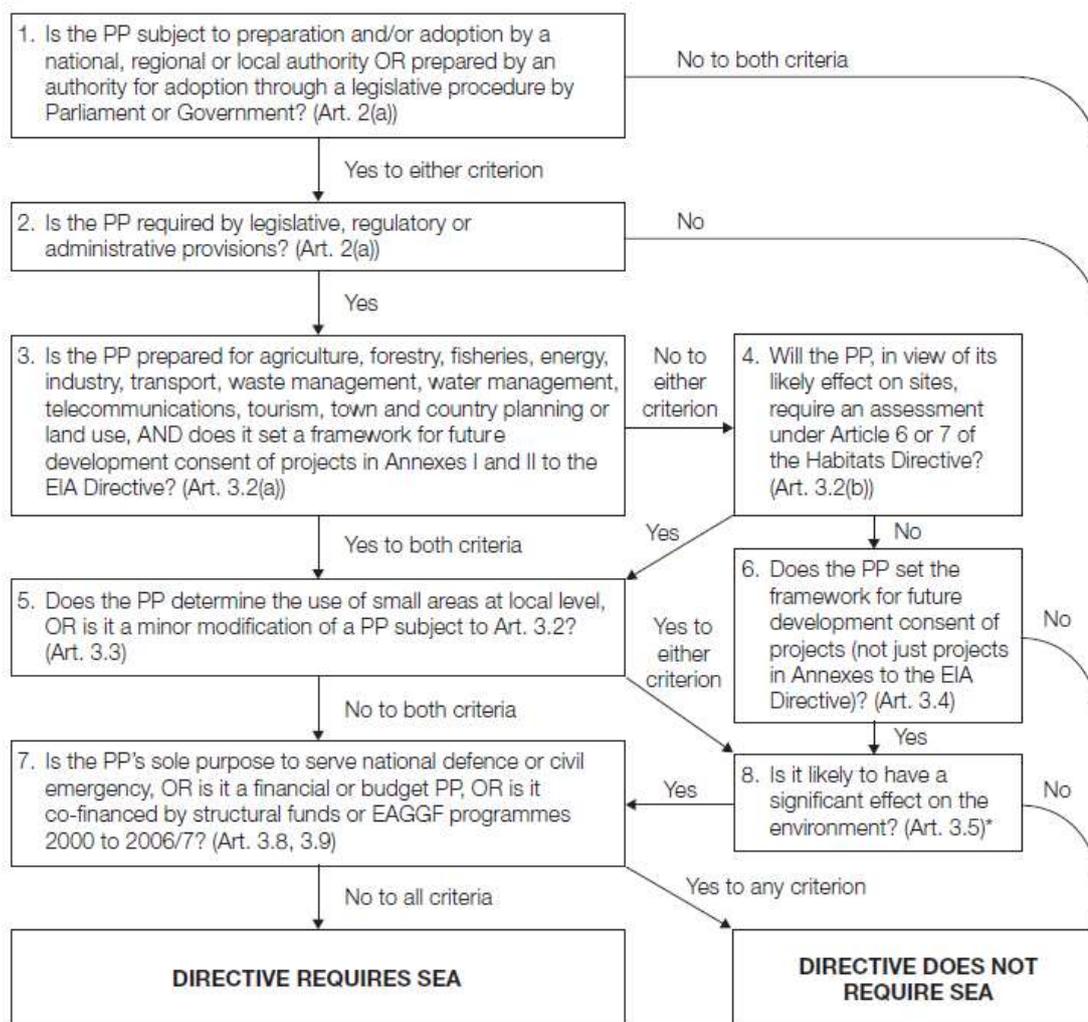
### The SEA Screening Process

- 1.34 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 1.28 to 1.33 of this screening assessment).
- 1.35 However, the main determining factor when considering whether a plan or programme requires SEA is whether it will have significant environmental effects.
- 1.36 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.
- 1.37 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 Fleet 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>2</sup>. The flow chart is shown in Figure 1.

**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.

<sup>2</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Process (2005) ODPM. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-environmental-assessment-directive-guidance>

1.38 The second step is to consider whether the Fleet 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 1 and step 2 are shown in Tables 1-6 and 1-7.

**Table 1-6: 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 Fleet Town 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 Fleet Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for town &amp; country planning and/or land use. The Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan identifies a number of areas within Fleet Town Centre where regeneration projects could come forward for a range of uses including retail, community, cultural and residential development as well as other main town centre uses. However, the areas identified in the plan are relatively small in scale and will not all come forward for the same use.</p>

Stage in Flowchart	Y/N	Reason
		<p>The Hart &amp; Rushmoor Retail, Leisure &amp; Town Centres Study Part 1 (2015) identifies a total of 3,166sqm of convenience retail floorspace and 4,829sqm of comparison retail floorspace for Fleet Town Centre over the period 2014-2032.</p> <p>As such, given the quantum of floorspace identified, it is unlikely that schemes of this size, even with additional complementary development such as residential and other town centre uses would fall within Annex I or II projects under the EIA Directive. Therefore, it is considered that the Pre-Submission Plan would not set a framework for future development consent of projects under Annexes I or II of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive. <b>Move to Stage 4.</b></p>
<p>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))</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The HRA screening undertaken in paragraphs 1.28 to 1.33 of this assessment has determined that Appropriate Assessment is not required. <b>Move to Stage 6.</b></p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Whilst not applicable, the plan will determine the use of small areas at a local level.</p> <p>The plan is not a minor modification of an existing plan.</p> <p><b>Move to Stage 6</b></p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>The Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan identifies areas within Fleet Town Centre where regeneration projects could come forward, although the policies do not set out the quantum of development to come forward but instead set out guiding principles</p>

Stage in Flowchart	Y/N	Reason
		<p>for development such as acceptable land uses and design principles. However the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to determine the use of small areas at a local level through policies 1-9 for specific uses, largely retail, community and cultural activities as well as potential for residential, although these are unlikely to exceed 8,000sqm of retail floorspace.</p> <p><b>Move to Stage 8.</b></p>
<p>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)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Although not applicable, the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan will not have the sole purpose to serve national defence or civil emergency and it will not be a financial or budgetary plan. Neither will it be co-financed by structural or EAGGF Programmes.</p>
<p>8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Article 3.5)</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>Effects on the environment and whether these are significant are considered in Table 1-7.</p> <p><b>If Significant Effects likely move to Stage 7</b></p>

**Table 1-7: 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.	<p>The Fleet Neighbourhood Plan will set out policies against which development proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be considered. The Pre-Submission Plan sets out general policies relating to design, protecting green spaces, enhancing the historic environment, protection for the TBH SPA and implementing enhanced cycling facilities. These policies should generally have a positive effect.</p> <p>The Pre-Submission Plan also identifies areas within Fleet Town Centre that could come forward for regeneration principles for a number of different uses. However, whilst the scale of proposals are unknown as no quantum of development has been set out within the policies, retail floorspace is unlikely to exceed 8,000sqm over the plan period and the requirements set out in Policies 1-9 and other policies in the plan should reduce or limit significant effects including for complementary uses such as community, cultural and residential development.</p> <p>As such, whilst the Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to set the framework for projects, these will be small in scale even in combination with one another.</p>		N
(b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	<p>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 and Hart Local Plan 2016-2032 once adopted. The saved and proposed policies of the Local Plan have informed the preparation of the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan policies. However, it is the Local Plan that will identify the strategic approach to new development in the District and the Neighbourhood Plan must be consistent with this rather than influence it.</p>		N

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response	
(c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan contains policies to protect and enhance environmental assets or features such as green spaces and the historic environment as well as securing good design and protecting the TBH SPA. As such, the plan should have positive effects on the built and natural environment including its local townscape character, heritage and with the protection for green spaces and the TBH SPA, local and wider biodiversity interests such as designated sites, priority habitats and the Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). Whilst the plan also has the potential to deliver development through identified areas for regeneration in Fleet Town Centre, given the overall combination of policies in the plan and scale of development, this is unlikely to give rise to significant effects and should, taken together, promote sustainable development.	N
(d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	Environmental problems include potential recreational or urbanising impacts to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright & Chobham Common SAC and the unfavourable declining status of the Basingstoke Canal SSSI. Paragraphs 1.26 to 1.33 of this assessment sets out the effects of the Neighbourhood Plan on the SPA/SAC in terms of recreational or urbanising effects and has determined no significant effects. The Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan contains Policy 14 directly relating to the Basingstoke Canal and refers to preserving and enhancing its environmental value. As such its impact on the SSSI should be largely positive.	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 Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan contains policies protecting green spaces, the TBH SPA, the character of the area and achieving good design and enhancing the historic environment. As such, the Neighbourhood Plan could aid in the implementation of other EU legislation.	N

<b>Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)</b>		<b>Response</b>
<b>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected</b>		
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	<p>The Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan identifies areas within Fleet Town Centre which could come forward for regeneration projects for a variety of different land uses including retail, community and cultural uses as well as potential residential development, although the amount of development is not specified this unlikely to exceed 8,000sqm of retail floorspace (set out in the emerging Local Plan).</p> <p>Whilst, the potential for development at these locations increases the probability of effects to arise the policies in the plan taken as a whole and scale of development should reduce or limit their impact</p> <p>The frequency of effects in terms of redeveloping sites is likely to be low but this depends on whether areas within Fleet Town Centre are developed in phases. Short term effects due to construction will be reversible but effects resulting from land use will be relatively permanent but should have generally positive effects given the requirements set out in the policies of the plan.</p> <p>Effects of protecting green spaces, character of the area, design, enhancing the historic environment, TBH SPA and cycling schemes should have a generally positive effect, with a reasonably high degree of frequency. Positive effects could be reversible in the longer term, depending on future policy approaches beyond the plan period, however this is not within the remit of the plan under consideration.</p>	N
(b) The cumulative nature of the effects	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan proposes policies for the protection of green spaces and the TBH SPA, design, enhancing the historic environment and cycling schemes. These policy approaches when taken in combination with the SSSIs, Site of Importance for Nature Conservation designations, priority habitats in the Hart BAP and saved policies from the</p>	N

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response	
	<p>Hart Local Plan 1996-2006 (Replacement) and First Alterations and proposed policies in the Hart Local Plan 2016-2032 as well as saved Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan and Hart's Interim Avoidance Strategy, should provide cumulative effects which are likely to be positive with respect to design, townscape, historic environment, green infrastructure and biodiversity.</p> <p>Whilst, the potential for regeneration schemes in Fleet Town Centre, could, in combination with other developments give rise to cumulative effects on issues such as traffic generation and noise, the scale of development not exceeding 8,000sqm of retail space and complementary uses is unlikely to lead to significant effects. It should also be noted that the SA/SEA of the Hart Local Plan 2016-2032 does not find significant effects to arise with respect to traffic generation when considering the plan as whole. The provision of cycling schemes could offset and lead to positive effects on air quality and traffic impacts although this is to some degree uncertain depending on whether cycling schemes come forward and achieves modal shift.</p>	
(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 Fleet Town Council in Hampshire. Excluding the Fleet North Ward which splits across the Neighbourhood Plan boundary, the area covered is around 800ha with a population at the time of the 2011 Census of 19,800 and 8,150 households. Given the scale and nature of development proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan and taking its policies as whole, it is	N

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of the Regulations)	Response	
	considered that effects are unlikely to be significant.	
<p>(f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</li> <li>ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;</li> <li>iii) Intensive land-use.</li> </ul>	<p>Given the nature of the Neighbourhood Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The Neighbourhood Plan area contains two SSSIs , Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and 2 listed buildings/structures. The area is largely urban in character but does contain features such as green spaces, playing pitches, incidental amenity and small wooded copses, but with larger wooded and heathland areas to the east. The Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan refers to objectives and policies for the protection of green spaces and townscape through securing good design as well as enhancing the historic environment and protecting the TBH SPA which should generally have positive effects for the built and natural environment. Although the plan identifies areas within Fleet Town Centre for regeneration proposals the individual policies relating to these areas and other policies of the plan as well as potential scale of development should reduce impacts.</li> <li>ii) Basingstoke Canal SSSI not meeting PSA target of 95% of the SSSI in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition and is in an unfavourable declining status. Policy 14 should have a generally positive effect for the Basingstoke Canal SSSI.</li> <li>iii) None identified, other than the urban nature of the west of the plan area.</li> </ul>	
(g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, Community or international protection status.	<p>The effects on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA and Thursley, Ash, Pirbright &amp; Chobham Common SAC are dealt with in (d) above. In any event, an HRA screening assessment has determined no significant effects.</p>	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>The Fleet Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects and as such an SEA is not required.</b>	

- 1.39 On the basis of the Screening process it is determined that the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan does not require an SEA under the SEA Directive and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004). This is because: -
- Development within the plan is small in scale unlikely to exceed 8,000sqm of retail floorspace and complementary development; and
  - The policies of the plan when taken as a whole and in combination with other policies in the Hart Local Plan 1996-2006 (Replacement) and First Alterations and proposed policies in the Hart Local Plan 2016-2032 will likely have positive effects.

## Conclusions

- 1.40 On the basis of the above, and following consultation with the statutory bodies, it is concluded that the Fleet 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.
- 1.41 From 20 March to 24 April 2018 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.