



**Basingstoke
and Deane**



Kingsclere Parish Office
37 George Street
Kingsclere, Newbury
Hampshire
RG20 5NH

09 April 2015

Dear Sir or Madam

Kingsclere Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion

This letter sets out the borough council's screening opinion concerning the need for SEA and HRA in relation to the Kingsclere Neighbourhood Plan. This screening opinion has been underpinned by a detailed report and the opinions of the three consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage).

The screening process undertaken concludes that in order to meet the 'basic conditions'¹ for neighbourhood planning **an Environmental Assessment is considered to be required to accompany the Kingsclere Neighbourhood Plan but it would not need to be subject to HRA.** The reasons for the decision are set out below:

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Natural England have set out in their response that as far as their strategic environmental interests are concerned (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils), there are likely to be significant environmental effects as a result of the proposed plan. English Heritage noted the presence of a conservation area and 95 listed buildings, and have also concluded that an SEA should be required.

In light of the consultation responses received from Natural England and English Heritage, and given the sensitive nature of the neighbourhood area, owing to the presence of a conservation area, numerous listed buildings and the AONB, and

¹ Requirement (f), that the making of the order or neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU Obligations. The basic conditions are set out in [paragraph 8\(2\) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

when considering the advice contained within the NPPG², it is considered that an SEA is required in relation to the proposed neighbourhood plan.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

The neighbourhood area is with 10km of three European sites. However, the village itself, and hence the likely location of the most environmentally relevant development, is outside of the 5km buffer zone for each of those European sites. In addition, the geographical relationship between the neighbourhood area and the European sites suggests that there is no likelihood of any impact on the European sites. Therefore, it is considered that no Appropriate Assessment is required. Natural England have stated that they agree with that conclusion.

The Environment Assessment will need to meet the relevant legal requirements set out in the [Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#). Further guidance on the requirements for carrying out the Environment Assessment is set out in the [National Planning Practice Guide](#) and [the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive: guidance](#). In addition, please feel free to contact the borough council (planning policy team) if you require any additional advice regarding how to complete the Environmental Assessment.

Yours Sincerely

Andrew Rushmer
Senior Planning Policy Officer

² Paragraph: 046 Reference ID: 11-046-20150209. Of particular relevance in this regard is that the neighbourhood plan will be allocating sites, and the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural and heritage assets that may be affected by the plan.