

Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Screening Opinion

Hart District Council

October 2022

Quality information

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1. Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 This SEA Screening Opinion has been prepared in relation to the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan by AECOM, on behalf of Hart District Council.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Screening Opinion is to set out AECOM's opinion in relation to whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is required to accompany the development of the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 This Screening Opinion is provided to the statutory consultation bodies for SEA (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) for their opinion. Subsequently, Hart District Council will make a final decision in respect of whether SEA is required.
- 1.4 Also, **Appendix I** presents a statement on Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening.

Background to SEA screening

- 1.5 SEA is a systematic process undertaken to evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of an emerging plan and reasonable alternatives. The requirement for SEA in England was introduced through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes ('SEA') Regulations (2004), which were prepared in order to transpose the EU SEA Directive (2001).
- 1.6 One of the 'Basic Conditions' that a neighbourhood plan is tested against is compatibility with European Union obligations, including obligations under the SEA Directive. Neighbourhood plans only require SEA where they are likely to lead to significant environmental effects. To decide whether a proposed Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant environmental effects, it should be screened having regard to the criteria set out in Annex 2 of the SEA Directive, which is transposed into the SEA Regulations as Schedule 1.
- 1.7 In essence, screening involves exploring potential cause-effect relationships between the plan and the environmental baseline.
- 1.8 Where it is determined that a neighbourhood plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, an SEA process is required. Where it is determined that the neighbourhood plan does not require SEA, a statement of reasons should be prepared and submitted alongside the plan.

Structure of this report

- 1.9 This report is structured as follows:
 - Section 2 – explores the scope of the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan;
 - Section 3 – introduces relevant environmental issues;
 - Section 3 – assesses the potential for the neighbourhood plan to lead to significant environmental effects on the environmental baseline; and
 - Section 4 – sets out the screening opinion.

2. Scope of the emerging plan

- 2.1 A draft plan has been prepared, following a process of evidence gathering / analysis and information consultation / since 2020. The Parish Council is now ready to publish the plan for formal consultation under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, subject to SEA screening.
- 2.2 A draft of the plan document was made available to inform this Screening Opinion. However, it is naturally the case that this draft is potentially subject to change. As such, it is important to 'screen' on the basis of broad understanding of the plan scope, more so than on the basis of specific draft content.
- 2.3 The established plan objectives are as follows:
- Conserve and enhance our **natural environment and the biodiversity** of Winchfield – informed by a “Landscape Character Appraisal and Key Views” report commissioned by the Parish Council, and with the aim of supporting “various District Council initiatives such as the Green Infrastructure Grid...” The objective also explains: *“New areas will be planted with various species of native trees and hedgerows...”*
 - Maintain, sustain and enhance our **historic environment** – a key focus is the Grade 1 listed church, and discussion concludes: *“The many historic buildings in Winchfield and archaeological areas of significant interest will be maintained and cared for.”*
 - Influence the sustainability of our **built environment** for the benefit of all parish residents – with the explanation that: *“Winchfield would, should a brownfield site become available, welcome a small development of mixed housing... New homes will be built to be sustainable and self-sufficient, ideally with shared facilities to support their infrastructure needs.”*
 - Promote **health and wellbeing** – the supporting text explains that there is a strong desire to support the existing high levels of recreational use of the countryside locally, with “many hundreds of visitors year- round...”
 - Support our **local economy** and sustain our **agricultural heritage** – the supporting text explains support for farming, equestrian activities, working from home, small businesses and also commuting by rail.
 - Value and cherish our village, encourage a thriving, strong, vibrant **community** and respond to the needs of our residents – importantly, the supporting text states: *“Should additional land become available the Parish Council would aspire to extend the [village] hall facilities...”*
 - Introduce, promote and monitor safety measures to improve **traffic** management and reduce rural **criminality** – the focus is on road and verge markings, signage and discouraging HGV rat-running.
 - Support Hart District Council initiatives to become a **carbon neutral** authority by 2035 and a carbon neutral district by 2040 – the focus is on supporting sequestration, mindful of at least 61 ha of broadleaf woodland.
- 2.4 The key point to note is that the neighbourhood plan will not allocate land for development. This is a key consideration for SEA screening, with the national [Planning Practice Guidance](#) (PPG) explaining:

*“A strategic environmental assessment may be required, for example, where...
“a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development.”*

- 2.5 It is recognised that the neighbourhood plan is set to include caveated support for limited development “should land become available”; however, this does not amount to an allocation. Whilst an allocation aims to demonstrate a degree of delivery certainty (e.g. for the purposes of calculating a five year housing land supply, in line with NPPF paragraph 11 and 66), there can be no certainty that development will happen as a direct result of the neighbourhood plan.
- 2.6 Also, and in any case, any development would be limited. Elsewhere the plan document explains: *“A Housing Needs survey was distributed to every household and business which resulted in a 40% response which identified the need for 6-8 homes should an available site come forward.”*
- 2.7 Finally, it is important to be clear that the adopted local plan does not direct any growth to the parish. There are just two small areas within the parish that have a defined settlement boundary, with the great majority of the parish falling outside of a defined settlement boundary, such that Local Plan [Policy NBE1](#) (Development in the Countryside) applies. There could potentially be support for a rural exception site outside of a defined settlement boundary, in line with Local Plan [Policy H3](#) (Rural Exception Sites); however, there is no reason to assume any such site will come forward for consideration.

Review of draft policies

- 2.8 As discussed, reviewing draft policies is not a necessary requirement of SEA screening, mindful that policies are subject to change (and mindful that should SEA ultimately be required, it must naturally be able to influence the plan). However, the draft policies naturally warrant a brief review.
- 2.9 The current version of the draft plan contains 17 policies, of which the great majority have no potential to generate significant environmental effects, either alone or in combination. These policies would not have the effect of increasing the likelihood of development, and a brief review does not serve to highlight any notable tensions with environmental objectives.
- 2.10 There are four key policies of note:
- Policy BE1 (New Development) – is supportive of development within defined settlement boundaries, provided that certain criteria are met.
Importantly, the policy proposes the definition of two new areas with a defined settlement boundary. However, both would be quite small, with one containing 62 homes and the other containing 23 homes.
 - Policy BE2 (Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites) – would exist alongside Local Plan Policy H3, which also allows for rural exception sites. The supporting text to Policy BE2 explains that a need has been identified for 6 to 8 affordable homes and that a process is underway to select a site. However, the Plan does not allocate an exception site and it seems unlikely that the policy will have the effect of encouraging a rural exception site, relative to the baseline situation whereby only Local Plan Policy H3 applies.

- Policy P&C2 (New Businesses And Employment Development) – supports small scale business development outside of settlement boundaries, stating: *“Where possible, business developments should be sited in existing buildings or on areas of previously developed land and be of a size and scale that does not adversely affect the character and appearance of the locality, the highway network, residential amenity, or the environment.”* Again, the key point to note is that this is a development management policy as opposed to a site allocation, and hence it is not possible to conclude that the effect will be to increase the likelihood of development coming forward relative to the baseline position.
- Policy NE7 (Energy Efficiency And Generation) – is a final policy of note. *The policy explains: “energy efficiency and renewable low carbon energy generation will be encouraged subject to compliance with other development plan policies but especially if they... [meet a range of criteria].”* The criteria will need to be carefully scrutinised, including to ensure that there is no conflict with national and local policy in respect of supporting decarbonisation. There could be a risk of some modest tensions between objectives, but that is not to say that there is any risk of significant environmental effects.

3. Scope of environmental issues

- 3.1 There are a range of environmental sensitivities locally, perhaps most notably the range of biodiversity sensitivities highlighted in Figure 3.1, namely two SSSIs (at the periphery of the parish) and a high density of locally designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). In addition, there are significant areas of non-designated priority habitat, most notably a large area of wood pasture at the northern extent of the parish (north of the M3) and a large area of floodplain grazing marsh at the northeast extent of the parish. There is also a high density of historic hedgerows and a range of valued trees, including identified veteran trees and others with a Tree Protection Order (TPO).
- 3.2 A further biodiversity consideration is the location of Winchfield Parish within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBHSPA), which is the zone of influence within which, according to Local Plan Policy NBE3: *“Mitigation measures will be required for all net new dwellings.... Measures must be based on a combination of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) and the provision and maintenance of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).”*
- 3.3 In light of the SPA constraint, the draft plan has been subjected to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening (see **Appendix 1**), concluding: *“The assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan policies presented in the table above identifies that there are no policies within the Neighbourhood Plan that will result in likely significant (adverse) effects on European sites including Thames Basin Heaths SPA. This is because none of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan promote or allocate housing or employment development and no site allocations are made within the Neighbourhood Plan. Since the Neighbourhood Plan presents no mechanism for impacts on Thames Basin Heaths SPA, it will not do so in combination with other projects and plans... Therefore, no appropriate assessment is required for this Neighbourhood Plan.”*

Figure 3.1: Biodiversity designations in and around the parish

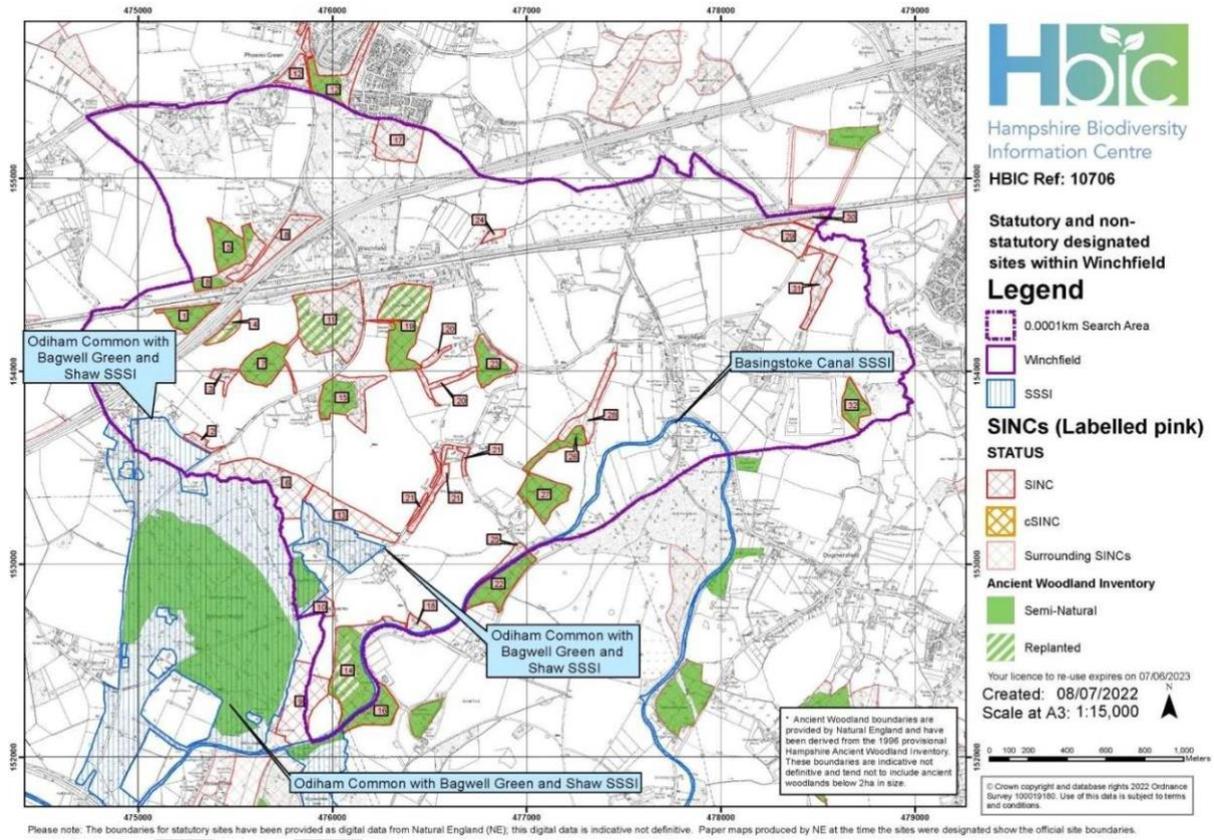
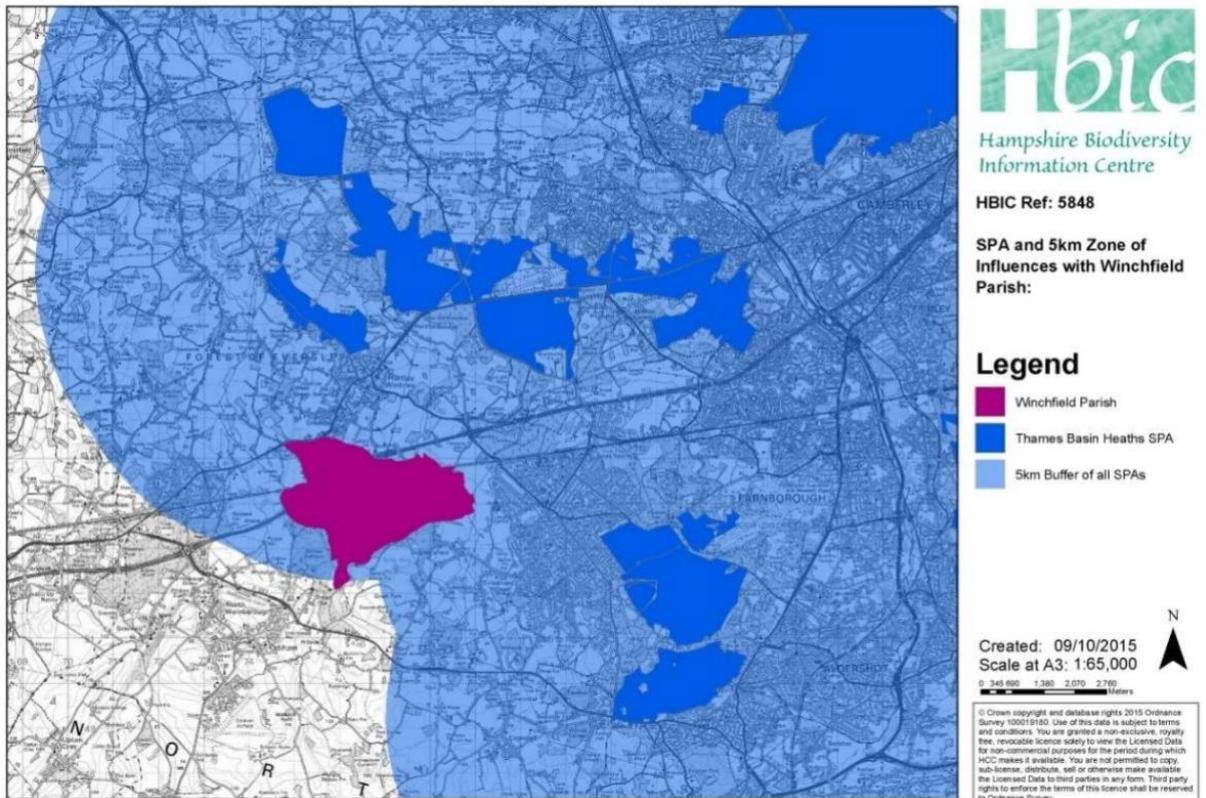


Figure 3.2: Thames Basin Heaths SPA 5km zone of influence



3.4 There are also a range of historic environment sensitivities, including:

- 29 listed buildings – primarily single Grade II buildings dispersed widely (mostly farmhouses), but also notably including: a cluster of six Grade II listed buildings at Swan’s Farm; Grade 2* listed Winchfield House; and the Grade I listed parish church (associated with a rural landscape setting).
- The very northern extent of Grade II listed Dogmersfield Park and also non-listed parkland / former parkland associated with Winchfield House;
- Two identified areas of high archaeological potential, with a range of identified finds, including potentially linked to a deserted medieval village, although there are no nationally designated scheduled monuments;
- 20 pillboxes, associated with a defensive line linked to the canal; and
- A wide range of other non-designated assets, including many set to be offered a degree of protection through the local plan, for example the Victorian former schoolhouse located next to the parish church.

3.5 There are a range of other environmental sensitives / issues besides, which are discussed further below.

4. Screening assessment

4.1 **Table 3.1** discusses the potential for significant environmental effects under a series of topic headings, which reflects the list of topics presented in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations. This list of topics is only an indicative starting-point for SEA, but is an appropriate framework under which to undertake screening.

4.2 Also, and to reiterate, the discussion is presented mindful of the ‘significance criteria’ set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. Further information is presented in **Appendix 2**.

Table 4.1: Assessment of potential significant environmental effects

Topic	Discussion of potential environmental effects	Potential for significant effects?
Biodiversity	<p>The sensitivity of the Parish is quite high, in the local and national context. Also, there are high densities of priority habitat, including ancient woodland, adjacent and close to the areas with a defined settlement boundary (existing and proposed), where any development would likely be focused (N.B. these areas are relatively distant from a SSSI). However, the overriding consideration is that the neighbourhood plan does not allocate land for development, plus any development that does come forward would be very limited in scale.</p> <p>A further consideration is the TBHSPA, but there is no potential for significant effects, as discussed above and below (Appendix I).</p>	No

Topic	Discussion of potential environmental effects	Potential for significant effects?
Cultural heritage	The parish is somewhat sensitive in historic environment terms, although primary areas of sensitivity are relatively distant from the main areas of settlement. As per the discussion above, under 'biodiversity', the primary consideration is that the neighbourhood plan will not allocate land for development.	No
Landscape	There are no landscape designations, but a range of work was undertaken as part of the process of preparing the adopted local plan that served to highlight landscape sensitivities. However, there is no potential for significant effects given that the neighbourhood plan will not allocate land for development.	No
Population and health	One of the proposed settlement policy boundaries is adjacent to the railway line, whilst the other is adjacent to the M3. However, the neighbourhood plan will not lead to any significant increased likelihood of development within or adjacent to these areas. In other respects, the plan will likely lead to positive effects on the baseline, for example through its focus on supporting access to the countryside. However, these are not issues or opportunities of such significance that SEA is warranted, with a view to ensuring that positive effects are maximised / opportunities realised.	No

Topic	Discussion of potential environmental effects	Potential for significant effects?
Climatic factors	<p>With regards to climate change mitigation / decarbonisation, again the key point to note is that the neighbourhood plan is not set to allocate land for development. Were this the case, then options would need to be carefully scrutinised from a transport decarbonisation perspective, given the rural nature of the parish, albeit the parish benefits from a train station.</p> <p>Furthermore, with regards to decarbonisation, there is the matter of thematic policies that are supportive of measures/interventions, subject to criteria being met, notably Draft Policy NE7 (Energy Efficiency And Generation), which is introduced above. The criteria will warrant further close examination, but it is not possible to predict the likelihood of significant effects, given there is no certainty regarding what, if any, developments the policies will be applied to in practice over the plan period.</p> <p>Finally, in respect of climate change adaptation / resilience, a primary consideration is flood risk. However, there are no significant concerns, noting that current fluvial flood risk zones do not affect any main areas of settlement.</p>	No
Soil	<p>A small area of land within the parish has been surveyed in detail and found to comprise best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land, and the national 'provisional' dataset serves to suggest that there could be wider BMV land. However, there is no potential for significant effects as the plan will not allocate land.</p>	No
Water	<p>The plan will not lead to development or an increase in population that leads to any significant concerns from a perspective of managing water quality or water resources. The main water courses are not located in close proximity to either an existing or proposed settlement boundary.</p>	No
Air	<p>There are no declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the vicinity of the parish.</p>	No
Material assets	<p>There are no identified issues over-and-above those discussed under other topic headings.</p>	No

5. Screening opinion

- 5.1 Whilst there are a range of environmental sensitivities locally, perhaps most notably in respect of biodiversity and the historic environment, **there is no potential for significant effects** because the neighbourhood plan will not allocate land for development.
- 5.2 Whilst the plan does propose to define two new settlement boundaries around existing areas of settlement, and is potentially somewhat supportive of a rural exception site coming forward in the future (likely for in the region of 6-9 homes), the plan will not directly lead to any development at all, let alone development of a scale that might generate significant effects.
- 5.3 A further consideration is that HRA screening (Appendix 1) has found that appropriate assessment is not required, hence the need for SEA is not triggered on HRA / appropriate assessment related grounds.
- 5.4 For these reasons, it is considered that **SEA is not required**.
- 5.5 The comments of the SEA statutory consultees are sought on this opinion.

Appendix 1: HRA Screening

Presented below is a memo dealing with: Habitats Regulations Assessment: Test of Likely Significant Effects. The conclusion is that:

“there are no policies within the Neighbourhood Plan that will result in likely significant (adverse) effects on European sites including Thames Basin Heaths SPA. This is because none of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan promote or allocate housing or employment development and no site allocations are made within the Neighbourhood Plan. Since the Neighbourhood Plan presents no mechanism for impacts on Thames Basin Heaths SPA, it will not do so in combination with other projects and plans.

Therefore, no appropriate assessment is required for this Neighbourhood Plan.”



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Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan

From:
James Riley, Technical Director, Habitats
Regulations Assessment

Date:
17 October 2022

Memo

Subject: Habitats Regulations Assessment: Test of Likely Significant Effects

- 1.1 This memo is intended to inform the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Test of Likely Significant Effects (known as HRA Screening) decision undertaken by Hart District Council for the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The objective of this assessment is to identify any likely significant effects arising from the Proposed Development on international sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs)) including, as a matter of Government policy, Ramsar sites, either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects, and to undertake appropriate assessment and advise on mitigation where necessary. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA is 1.8km from Winchfield parish boundary and 2.5km from Winchfield village itself.
- 1.3 The need for HRA is set out within the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended; see Figure 1 below).
- 1.4 The first stage of any HRA is a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) test - essentially a risk assessment to decide whether the full subsequent stage known as AA is required. The essential question is: "Is the Plan, either alone or in combination with other relevant projects and plans, likely to result in a significant effect upon European sites?" and this decision must take into account other plans and projects. The objective is to 'screen out' those plans and projects that can, without any detailed appraisal, be said to be unlikely to result in significant impacts upon European sites, usually because there is no mechanism for an interaction with European sites. This task is undertaken in this memo.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Regulations state that:

“A competent authority, before deciding to ... give any consent for a plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site ... shall make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that sites conservation objectives... The authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site”.

With specific reference to Neighbourhood Plans, Regulation 106(1) states that:

“A qualifying body which submits a proposal for a neighbourhood development plan must provide such information as the competent authority [the Local Planning Authority] may reasonably require for the purpose of the assessment under regulation 105... [which sets out the formal process for determination of ‘likely significant effects’ and the appropriate assessment].”

Figure 1: The legislative basis for Appropriate Assessment

- 1.5 With respect to heathland birds specifically, Liley and Clarke¹ found that the density of European nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* was directly related to the amount of surrounding development, with sites surrounded by higher levels of development supporting fewer nightjars. The species’ breeding success appears to be much higher at less visited sites², with path proximity correlating strongly with nest failure, up to 225m from the path edge. Similarly, woodlark *Lullula arborea* and Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata* are also affected significantly by disturbance. Mallord estimated that, for 16 sites in southern England, 34% more woodlark chicks would be raised if all sites were free from disturbance³. Although Dartford warblers do not appear to be as sensitive to human disturbance (possibly as they are not ground nesting), their breeding parameters are still affected by disturbance levels from humans and their pets⁴.
- 1.6 Natural England’s Site Improvement Plan (SIP) for Thames Basin Heaths SPA identifies public access as the most important pressure / threat to the site, potentially impacting breeding birds. The SIP states that *‘Parts of the Thames Basin Heaths... are subject to high levels of recreational use... This is likely to be affecting the distribution and overall numbers of ground-nesting Annex 1 birds (and breeding success) ... There is also concern at the growing use of parts of the complex by commercial dog walkers and desire to control this.’* Natural England’s Supplementary

¹ Liley, D. & Clarke, R. T., 2002. The impact of human disturbance and human development on key heathland bird species in Dorset. Sixth National Conference (eds Underhill JC & Liley D). Bournemouth, RSPB.

Liley, D. & Clarke, R. T., 2003. The impact of urban development and human disturbance on the numbers of nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* on heathlands in Dorset, England. *Biological Conservation*, 114(2), pp. 219-230.

² Murison, G., 2002. The impact of human disturbance on the breeding success of the nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* on Heathlands in South Dorset, England, s.l.: English Nature.

³ Liley, D., Jackson, D. & Underhill-Day, J., 2005. Visitor Access Patterns on the Thames Basin Heaths, Peterborough: English Nature Research Report 682.

Mallord, J., 2005. Predicting the consequences of human disturbance, urbanisation and fragmentation for a woodlark *Lullula arborea* population., Norwich, UK: PhD Thesis, University of East Anglia.

⁴ Murison, G., 2007. The impact of human disturbance, urbanisation and habitat type on a Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata* population, s.l.: Doctoral Dissertation, University of East Anglia

Advice on the Conservation Objectives for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA acknowledges that all three qualifying bird species are sensitive to disturbance and notes that disturbance from human activity is particularly significant at the SPA as many parts of the site are in close proximity to urban areas and there is high pressure from new residential development.

- 1.7 In 2005, English Nature (predecessor of Natural England) commissioned a study of visitor access patterns (Liley, et al., 2005) at 26 key access locations across the Thames Basin Heaths SPA to provide a baseline of recreational pressure. This established that the site had a core recreational catchment of 5km i.e. at least 75% of local resident visitors lived within 5km of the SPA (actually 88%). In 2012/13 a repeat visitor survey⁵ was undertaken which identified that 94% of postcodes fell within 5km of the SPA. A further survey in 2018⁶ reaffirmed the 5km core catchment.
- 1.8 Due to the recreational impact expected on the SPA without mitigation, Policy NBE3 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) of the adopted Hart Local Plan sets out the policy requirements which in summary means that any net new housing within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA must be mitigated through a combination of provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and contributions to Sustainable Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).
- 1.9 The following table examines every policy in the Winchfield Neighbourhood Plan to determine whether any pose the potential for likely significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

Policy	Policy summary	Test of Likely Significant Effects
NE1 – Landscape Character	All development should respect the key characteristics of the landscape character areas set out in Winchfield Landscape Character Assessment. Sets out the circumstances under which development will be supported.	This is an environmentally positive development management policy and poses no potential for significant adverse effects on Thames Basin Heaths SPA
NE2 – Protection of Key Views	Sets out the requirement for a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal for development situated within certain key views	This is an environmentally positive development management policy and poses no potential for significant adverse effects on Thames Basin Heaths SPA
NE3 – Landscape Corridor at Brenda Parker Way	Safeguards the landscape corridor	This is an environmentally positive development management policy and poses no potential for significant adverse effects on Thames Basin Heaths SPA

⁵ Fearnley, H. & Liley, D., 2013. Results of the 2012/13 visitor survey on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), s.l.: Natural England Commissioned Reports Number 136. 107pp.

⁶ Southgate, J., Brookbank, R., Cammack, K. & Mitchell, J., 2018. Visitor Access Patterns on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA: Visitor Questionnaire Survey 2018, s.l.: Natural England Commissioned Report. 82pp.

Policy	Policy summary	Test of Likely Significant Effects
NE4 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows	Sets out the protection of ancient woodland and the circumstances under which a tree survey would be required and a requirement for new native tree and shrub planting in all development	This is an environmentally positive development management policy and poses no potential for significant adverse effects on Thames Basin Heaths SPA
NE5 – Dark Skies	Sets out requirement for dark skies and the necessity for only minimum necessary external lighting	This is an environmentally positive development management policy and poses no potential for significant adverse effects on Thames Basin Heaths SPA
NE6 – Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement	Sets out the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain and that development proposals should retain, and where possible enhance, existing watercourses, wetlands, ponds, copses, woodlands, mature native trees, hedgerows, and roadside verges. The loss of, or material harm to, key features of the landscape, such as the Basingstoke Canal, trees, hedgerows, and other natural features including ponds will not be supported.	This is an environmentally positive development management policy and poses no potential for significant adverse effects on Thames Basin Heaths SPA
NE7 – Energy Efficiency and Generation	Sets out circumstances under which new energy generation proposals would be supported	This is a development management policy and poses no potential for significant adverse effects on Thames Basin Heaths SPA
HE1 – Heritage Assets	Sets out requirements for a Heritage Statement to protect heritage assets in the parish	This is an environmentally positive development management policy and poses no potential for significant adverse effects on Thames Basin Heaths SPA
HE2 – Non-Designated Heritage Assets	The retention and protection of non-designated heritage assets, including buildings, structures, features, archaeological sites, and gardens of local interest must be safeguarded.	This is an environmentally positive development management policy and poses no potential for significant adverse effects on Thames Basin Heaths SPA
BE1 – New Development	Sets out that all new development should take place within the settlement boundaries and that all new development should be cited to	This is a development management policy and poses no potential for significant adverse effects on

Appendix 2: Screening criteria

As discussed, Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations presents a list of criteria that must be taken into account as part of SEA screening. These criteria fed into the assessment presented in Section 4. However, it is appropriate to also present a discussion under each of the criteria headings in turn.

Criteria	Significant effect?	Discussion
1. The characteristics of the NP, having particular regard to:		
(a) the degree to which the NP sets out a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	No	The plan will set policies that will be taken into account as part of any future planning applications, but does not allocate land for development, which is a key consideration when screening, as set out in planning practice guidance.
(b) the degree to which the NP influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	No	The NP would be a consideration as part of any future local plan review, but would not influence it to the extent of generating significant effects.
(c) the relevance of the NP for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	No	The plan is relevant to the integration of environmental and wider sustainable development considerations as part of the process of considering planning applications locally. However, effects will be broadly positive, and not significant to the extent that SEA is warranted, with a view to ensuring that benefits are maximised / opportunities fully realised.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	No	There are a range of environmental sensitivities and issues, as discussed in Sections 3 and 4. Having taken these into account, the conclusion is that there is not likely to be the potential for significant effects.
(e) the relevance of the plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example plans and programmes related to waste management or water protection)	No	It is not anticipated that the plan will have a notable bearing, in this respect.

Criteria	Significant effect?	Discussion
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular,		
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	No	Importantly, it is not the objective of the NP to allocate sites for development. The policy proposals in the plan are potentially reversible, e.g. through a local plan review.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	No	A primary consideration is the cumulative effect of the neighbourhood plan and the forthcoming local plan review. However, the scope of that local plan review is not known at the current time, and it is not thought likely that policies within the neighbourhood plan risk unduly hindering the consideration of strategic options for the district through the local plan.
(c) the trans boundary nature of the effects	No	Perhaps a primary consideration is the close association of the parish with the railway line between Fleet and Basingstoke (with a station in the parish), and also the M3 motorway (there is no junction in the parish). However, the limited scope of the plan serves to allay any concerns.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accident)	No	One of the proposed settlement policy boundaries is adjacent to the railway line, whilst the other is adjacent to the M3. However, the plan will not lead to any significant increased likelihood of development within or adjacent to these settlement boundaries.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No	The neighbourhood plan envisages only very limited growth in the parish over the plan period, and the plan will not have the effect of increasing the likelihood or scale of development.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special natural characteristics or heritage ▪ Exceeded env. quality standards or limit values ▪ Intensive land use 	No	There are a range of environmental sensitivities. In particular, there are two SSSIs and also a grade 1 listed parish church. However, these are in somewhat peripheral locations, which helps to allay any concerns.
(g) areas or landscapes with a recognised protection status	No	