



Screening Statement on the determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment for the emerging Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan

28 November 2018

1. Introduction

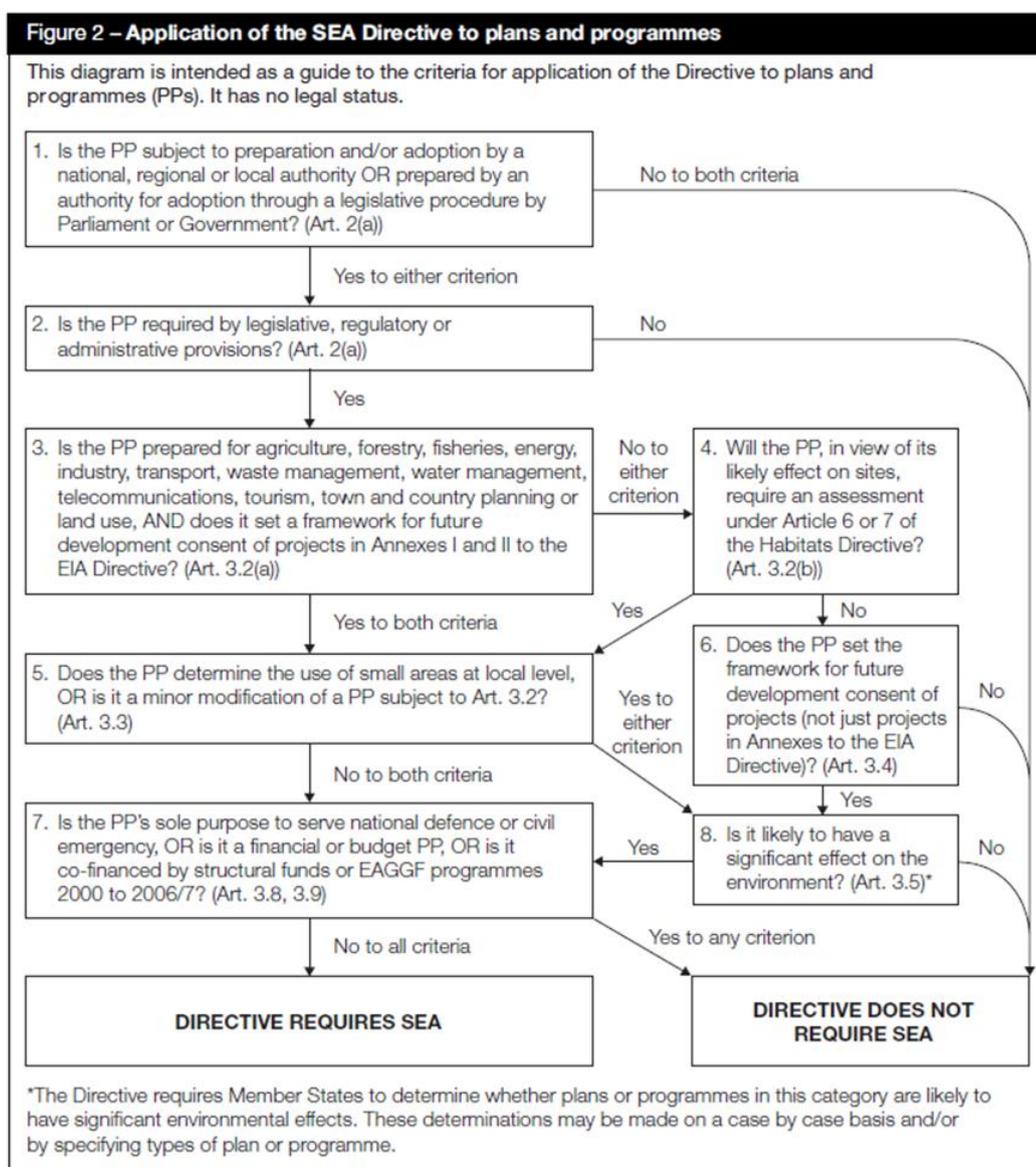
- 1.1 The whole of the parish of Hythe & Dibden was formally designated as a ‘Neighbourhood Area’ under the relevant Neighbourhood Planning Regulations in 2015 by the New Forest National Park Authority and New Forest District Council (as the parish includes land within both the District Council and National Park Authority planning administrative boundaries).
- 1.2 Hythe & Dibden Parish Council is now in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the whole of the parish. Subject to approval at the local referendum and the Examination in Public, the Neighbourhood Plan will have formal status as part of the statutory ‘development plan’ for the parish.
- 1.3 On 5 July 2017 Hythe & Dibden Parish Council formally wrote to the New Forest National Park Authority (as the ‘responsible authority’ under the relevant Regulations) to request a formal screening opinion on the requirement for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan insofar as it relates to land within the New Forest National Park. A similar request was simultaneously made to New Forest District Council regarding the majority of the designated Neighbourhood Area that falls within the District Council’s planning remit.
- 1.4 Following this initial request for an SEA and HRA screening opinion, in September 2017 both the National Park Authority and New Forest District Council confirmed in writing to the Parish Council that a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) were required. This conclusion was supported by the three consultation bodies set out in the relevant Regulations - the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The conclusion was based on the fact that the draft Neighbourhood Plan was looking to allocate a number of sites for development in an area with a range of sensitive natural and built environment assets.
- 1.5 Following a period of public consultation in Summer 2018, the Parish Council wrote to the National Park Authority on 12 October 2018 to confirm that a decision had been made to reduce the scope of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council had taken the decision to remove the proposed allocations for housing, burial land, transport infrastructure and new cycle links and has therefore asked the Authority to re-assess whether a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) are still required.
- 1.6 The Authority’s updated 2018 screening opinion was formally requested in accordance with:
 - (i) European Directive 2001/42/EC (‘SEA Directive’) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (‘SEA Regulations’) which require an SEA to be undertaken on any land use plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consents. Regulation 9 of the Regulations states that the responsible authority must take into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to Regulations and consult the consultation bodies in determining whether an SEA is required; and
 - (ii) European Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora (‘Habitats Directive’) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (‘Habitat Regulations’).
- 1.7 This report sets out the National Park Authority’s formal screening opinion of November 2018 on whether the emerging Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan (which is now reduced in scope from that previously consulted on) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or Habitats Regulations Assessment. In issuing this screening opinion the Authority has had regard to advice in the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) resource which confirms that assessments should be proportionate, and should not repeat policy assessments that have already taken place.

1.8 The screening process undertaken by the National Park Authority has been based on established criteria. The Authority has also consulted with New Forest District Council (who are going through the same process for their respective part of the designated Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Area), Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England.

2. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Process

2.1 Set out below is an extract from ‘A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive’, DCLG (2005) which demonstrates the SEA screening process. The National Park Authority has adopted a consistent approach to that taken by New Forest District Council in determining whether the emerging Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. The District Council has undertaken a separate screening process for the majority of the parish that lies within their planning remit and the consultation bodies received this separate screening statement in October 2018. As outlined above, this updated November 2018 screening statement is based on the reduced scope of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, which no longer includes proposed allocations.



2.2 The key to the screening decision is the determination of whether the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects using the criteria set out in Annex II of the Directive and Schedule 1 of the 2004 Regulations. These criteria are set out in the following tables alongside an assessment against the emerging Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 1: Application of SEA Directive to the emerging Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan

Stage	Yes / No	Explanation
1. <i>Is the Neighbourhood Plan subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))</i>	Yes	The preparation and adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan is enabled by the Localism Act 2011. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by Hythe & Dibden Parish Council and will be “made” by the National Park Authority as the local authority for the part of the Neighbourhood Area that falls within the Park. The preparation of Neighbourhood Plan is subject to the following regulations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012; ▪ Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012; ▪ Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.
2. <i>Is the Neighbourhood Plan required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))</i>	Yes	Although the production of a Neighbourhood Plan is optional under the Localism Act 2011, once commenced its preparation is covered by relevant legislation and requirements. Once adopted the Plan will form part of the statutory ‘development plan’ for the National Park. It is therefore important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and hence whether SEA is required under the Directive.
3. <i>Is the Neighbourhood Plan 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 (see Appendix 2) to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))</i>	No	The Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared for the purposes of town & country / land use planning and will set out a framework for future development consents as part of the statutory development plan covering Hythe & Dibden. However, it should also be noted that the Neighbourhood Plan is no longer seeking to allocate land for development and the Neighbourhood Plan will not increase the scale of development from that established in the respective development plans for the National Park and New Forest District.
4. <i>Will the Neighbourhood Plan, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))</i>	No	The designated Neighbourhood Area includes a wealth of internationally protected habitats (including the New Forest and Southampton Water Natura 2000 sites). However, the Neighbourhood Plan will not include any allocations for development and is not seeking to increase the level of development from that in the adopted development plans for the National Park and New Forest District. The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion that follows in Section 3 provides more detail on this.

<p>5. <i>Does the Neighbourhood Plan determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)</i></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan will determine the use of sites at a wider than small area / local level. The parish of Hythe & Dibden extends to approximately 12 square kilometres (4 square kilometres of which lie within the National Park), covering 20,000 people. However, unlike the Authority’s original screening opinion of September 2017, it has now been confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan will not include any proposed land allocations for development.</p>
<p>6. <i>Does the Neighbourhood Plan set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)</i></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Once adopted, the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan will include policies to provide a framework to guide future development within the Parish. The Plan will form part of the statutory ‘development plan’ for the parish and in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act will be the starting point for planning decisions on development proposals.</p>
<p>7. <i>Is the Neighbourhood Plan’s sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)</i></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>8. <i>Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)</i></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan will, once adopted, form part of the statutory development plan for the National Park, in an area with a range of natural and built environment designations. However, the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan has been reduced from that previously consulted on, with all of the proposed land allocations for housing, transport infrastructure and cycle links removed. Consequently the Authority’s revised screening opinion is that the Neighbourhood Plan does <u>not</u> require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as it is not proposing a scale of development above that contained within the adopted development plan for the National Park.</p>

2.3 The Government’s National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) resource recognises that in some limited cases, where a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant effects, it may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The NPPG goes onto state that an SEA may be required where a Neighbourhood Plan allocates sites for development and/or the Neighbourhood Area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan. Given the removal of all of the proposed land allocations for new housing and transport infrastructure development in the emerging Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan, the National Park Authority has concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is no longer required. The following table assesses the likely significance of effects on the environment in accordance with the criteria established in Regulation 9 and [Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations](#).

Table 2 - Assessment of the likely significance of effects on the environment (SEA) – based on Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

1. Characteristics of the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan, having regard to:	
<i>(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;</i>	The Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan will, once adopted, form part of the statutory ‘development plan’ for the parish and provide the planning framework for consenting development proposals. Under Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act it would therefore form part of the legal planning framework for the consideration and consenting of future development projects within the wider framework set by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); the strategic policies of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD (2010); and the emerging New Forest National Park Local Plan Review 2016 – 2036.
<i>(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans & programmes including those in a hierarchy;</i>	The Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan will be in conformity with statutory National Park purposes (as originally established in the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949) and the relevant sections of the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework. The policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will also be in general conformity with the strategic planning policies contained within the adopted Core Strategy (2010) and emerging Local Plan Review (2016-2036) covering the National Park.
<i>(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;</i>	The Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan will potentially contain policies relating to environmental considerations such as biodiversity, the historic environment and sustainability. The parish includes a wealth of natural and built environmental designations that will be key considerations in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. The NPPF (2012) places the presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of national planning system (paragraph 14) and also includes a range of environmental policies that the Neighbourhood Plan is required to be in general conformity with. The SEA aims to ensure environmental factors are fully considered when planning for ‘sustainable’ development.
<i>(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and</i>	The designated Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Area includes (or lies immediately adjacent to) a wealth of environmental designations. In terms of habitat designations, these include the following either within the part of the Neighbourhood Area within the National Park, or in close proximity to it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) - New Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - New Forest Ramsar - Solent and Southampton Water SPA

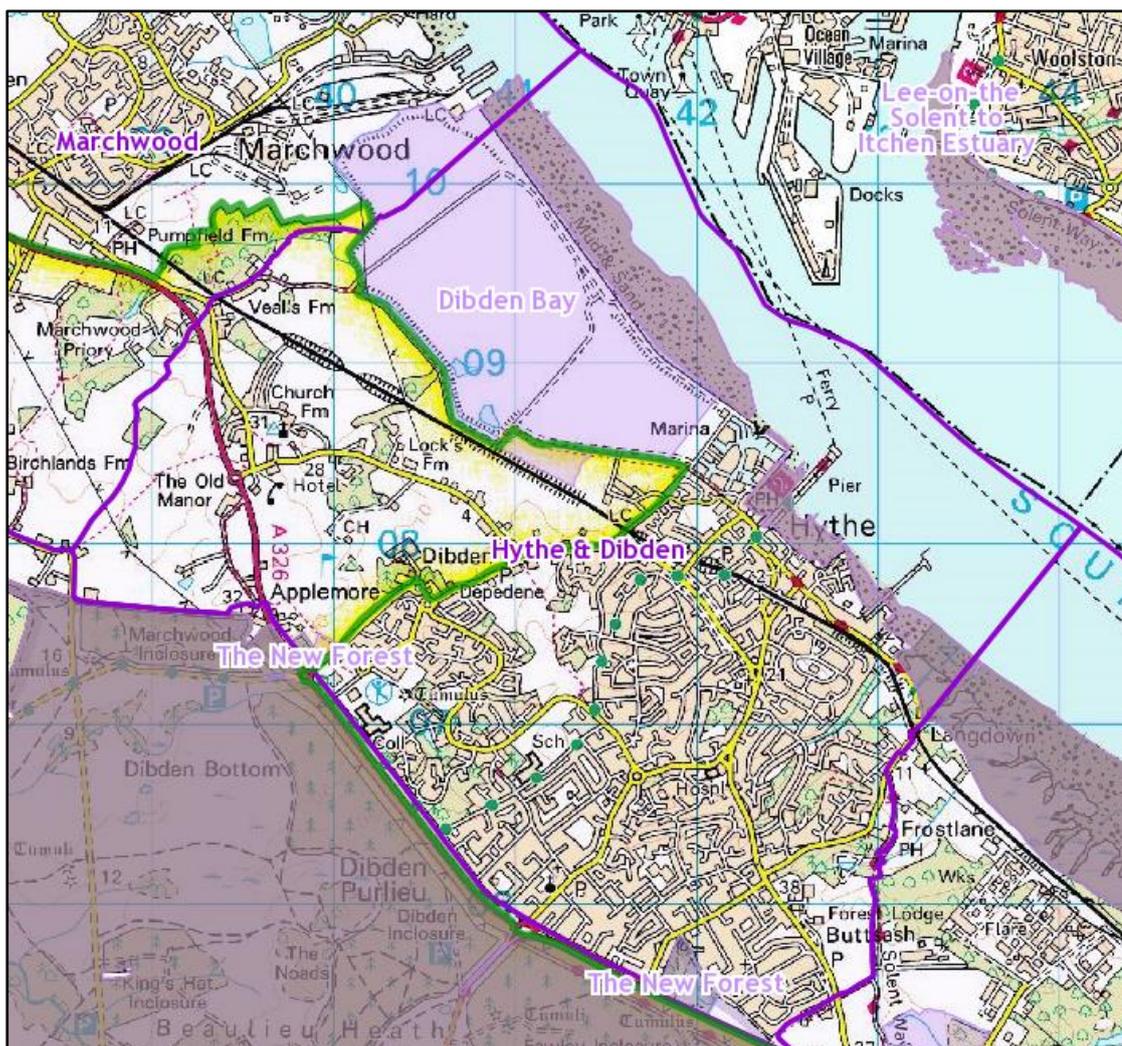
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solent Maritime SAC - Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar - National SSSI designations (including the New Forest SSSI, Dibden Bay SSSI and Hythe to Calshot Marshes SSSI). <p>The Neighbourhood Area is also affected by flooding (fluvial and coastal), with significant parts of the coastline of the Parish at risk from flooding as indicated by information publicly available from the Environment Agency and the New Forest Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).</p> <p>The scope of the draft Neighbourhood Plan has been revised to remove all of the proposed site allocations for housing and transport infrastructure, as well as the proposed burial ground allocation. Consequently, although the Neighbourhood Plan covers an area of high habitat value, the Plan is not proposing to increase the level of development from that contained in the existing development plans for the area.</p>
<p>(e) <i>the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).</i></p>	<p>The Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan is not directly relevant to any of these.</p>
<p>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</p>	
<p>(a) <i>the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;</i></p>	<p>Given that the Neighbourhood Plan is no longer seeking to allocated land for development, the environmental impacts of the Plan are likely to be limited. The Neighbourhood Plan is likely to include a range of objectives and policies that aim to support the enhancement of the natural and built environment of the parish.</p>
<p>(b) <i>the cumulative nature of the effects;</i></p>	<p>As outlined above, the Neighbourhood Plan is no longer seeking to allocate sites for development and therefore there will be no cumulative impacts.</p>
<p>(c) <i>the transboundary nature of the effects;</i></p>	<p>The effects of the Plan are unlikely to have transboundary impacts (i.e. other Member States).</p>
<p>(d) <i>the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);</i></p>	<p>There are no significant risks to human health or the environment.</p>

<p>(e) <i>the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</i></p>	<p>The full Neighbourhood Plan Area covers the settlements of Hythe & Dibden Purlieu (population circa 20,000 people) and the more rural parts of the parish around Applemore and Dibden Golf Club. The total area of the designated Neighbourhood Area is approximately 12 square kilometres, of which approximately 4 square kilometres lies within the New Forest National Park. Given the population and geographical area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan, significant effects are considered likely.</p>
<p>(f) <i>the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</i> <i>(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</i> <i>(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;</i> <i>or</i> <i>(iii) intensive land-use; and</i></p>	<p>There are a significant number of international nature conservation sites within or adjoining the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Area. These sites are vulnerable to impacts. However, as the Neighbourhood Plan is no longer seeking to allocate any sites for development it is judged that it is unlikely to result in significant impacts on environmental assets.</p> <p>The area also contains a rich built heritage, with the Hythe Conservation Area focused on St Johns Road and Prospect Place (outside the National Park). In addition there are a number of listed buildings located within the National Park area of the Neighbourhood Area, including Glebelands, All Saints Church and the Old Manor.</p> <p>Around 35% of the designated Neighbourhood Area lies within the New Forest National Park. The first statutory National Park purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park. The area within the National Park includes a number of areas of designated ancient woodland, including Roy’s Copse, Smither’s Copse, Beady’s Copse and Bramshot Hill, some of which are also designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).</p>
<p>(g) <i>the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</i></p>	<p>As outlined above, there are a range of designated habitats within or adjacent to the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Area that have been protected at national and international level.</p> <p>In addition, around 35% of the designated Neighbourhood Area lies within the New Forest National Park (one of only 10 National Parks in the country). National Parks – including the New Forest - have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty (paragraph 115 of the NPPF) and great weight should also be given to the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage within the National Park. Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 requires relevant authorities to have regard to the two statutory Park purposes in making decisions that could affect National Parks. This applies to the preparation of plans and projects outside National Parks, but which could impact on them.</p>

2.4 As it has been concluded that there is potential for likely significant environmental effects, an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

3. The Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Process

3.1 Hythe & Dibden Parish Council has also sought a revised screening opinion from the National Park Authority on the need for a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The National Park Authority is the “competent authority” under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010, and therefore needs to ensure the emerging Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed through the Habitats Regulations process. This looks at the potential for significant impacts on nature conservation sites that are of international importance, also referred to as Natura 2000 sites. The National Park includes a number of internationally important habitats and the map below illustrates these designations in relation to the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Area.



Key:

	Parish Boundary
	National Park Boundary
	Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) & Ramsar sites; Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

3.2 On the basis that the Neighbourhood Plan was seeking to allocate development sites, in September 2017 the Authority advised the Parish Council that a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) was required. This screening opinion is now being revisited in light of the

reduced scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, which will no longer include any land allocations for new development. The Authority's screening assessment uses the scoping work on the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the New Forest National Park Local Plan Review (2016 – 2036) as the basis for the assessment. This approach recognises that the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan will be in general conformity within the higher level development plans prepared by the National Park Authority and New Forest District Council.

- 3.3 From this, the Authority has determined whether the revised Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan is likely to result in significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites either alone or in combination with other plans and policies and, therefore, whether an 'Appropriate Assessment' is required.

Legislative Background

- 3.4 Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive provides that:

"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [European] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."

Assessment

- 3.5 As outlined above, a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) has already been prepared for the submission version of the New Forest National Park Local Plan Review (2016-2036). This assessment was prepared in consultation with Natural England and other bodies. The Authority's Submission draft Local Plan 2016 – 2036 sets out proposals for 800 additional dwellings across the National Park over the Plan period, recognising the National Park as an area of restraint. However, even with this comparatively low level of development the HRA work on the National Park Local Plan has concluded that significant impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites within the National Park cannot be ruled out. This conclusion recognises the in-combination effects caused by the development plans prepared for areas surrounding the National Park. The main areas where potential impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites in the New Forest are summarised below.

Direct loss or physical damage due to construction: The potential for development to result in loss of habitat which lies outside European site boundaries but which is used by the qualifying bird populations of Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar site; Dorset Heathlands SPA; New Forest SPA; or Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site will require more detailed consideration. Should HRA Screening be unable to rule out likely significant effects then more detailed Appropriate Assessment will be required to determine whether loss of the supporting habitat present at the development site would have an adverse effect on the integrity of Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar site; Dorset Heathlands SPA; New Forest SPA; or Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site.

Disturbance and other urban edge effects from construction or occupation of buildings: It is not possible to rule out the potential for urban edge effects such as pet predation from new residential development within 400 m of New Forest SPA or from effects such as noise pollution or light pollution from all types of built development. The New Forest SPA is located within 400 metres of

parts of the designated Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Area at its nearest point and therefore this potential effect cannot be ruled out at this stage.

Recreational pressure: Likely significant effects cannot be ruled out for: (i) residential development and visitor accommodation within New Forest National Park on the New Forest SAC and SPA; and (ii) residential development and visitor accommodation within 5.6km of the Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA, and Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site.

Changes in water quality: The HRA Scoping Report identifies European sites vulnerable to a deterioration in water quality as: River Avon SAC; Avon Valley SPA & Ramsar site; Dorset Heathlands SAC & Ramsar site; the New Forest SAC & Ramsar site; Solent & Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC; Solent Maritime SAC; Solent & Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site.

Changes in air quality: Further work has been commissioned by the National Park Authority and New Forest District Council in relation to traffic modelling and impacts on air quality. It is not possible to rule out the likelihood that the increases in road traffic on the relevant major roads and associated air pollution would be significant, particularly in combination with development proposed in neighbouring districts. The further work will quantify this.

- 3.6 Due to the reduced scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, which no longer includes proposed land allocations for new development, **it is concluded that the emerging Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan now does not require a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**. The draft Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to increase the scale of development from that set out in the adopted development plan for the National Park, or indeed that set out in the Authority's Local Plan review. Given that the Authority's development plan documents have all been subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment is it considered that these existing assessments cover the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

4 Statutory Consultees

4.1 The National Park Authority's revised SEA and HRA Screening Opinion was sent to Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England - as statutory consultation bodies under Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations - on 23 October 2018. The statutory consultees were asked to respond by 20 November 2018. The revised screening opinion was also shared with New Forest District Council who has responded to a similar screening request from Hythe & Dibden Parish Council relating to the majority of the parish that lies within the District Council's planning remit. A summary of the consultation responses received is set out below.

(i) *Natural England* (received 20.11.18)

4.2 Natural England's response confirms that on the basis of the information supplied with the consultation, in so far as their strategic environmental interests are concerned, "*...there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.*"

4.3 Based on their records, Natural England confirmed their view that, "*...the proposals contained within the Plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.*"

(ii) *Historic England* (received 25.11.18)

4.4 Historic England outlined their understanding that, following consultation earlier in 2018, the Neighbourhood Plan has been reviewed and the proposed allocations for housing, transport infrastructure and cycle links have been removed. Historic England concluded that although the historic environment of the parish remains sensitive, following the deletion of the proposed allocations, "*Historic England considers that the revised Plan would be unlikely to lead to any significant effects on the historic environment of the Plan area. We therefore agree with the Authority's determination that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required for the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan.*" Historic England reserved the right to review this opinion when the full Neighbourhood Plan became available.

(iii) *Environment Agency* (received 28.11.18)

4.4 The Environment Agency's response notes the recent changes to the scope of the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan and the removal of proposed site allocations. The Environment Agency concludes that as a result of these changes, "*...we therefore consider that the Neighbourhood Plan would not have a significant environmental effect and as such would not require an SEA in relation to the issues in our remit.*"

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Hythe & Dibden Parish Council has requested a revised screening opinion from the New Forest National Park Authority given that the scope of the draft Neighbourhood Plan has been significantly reduced from that originally outlined in 2017. **The revised screening process undertaken by the National Park Authority concludes that given that the draft Neighbourhood Plan is no longer seeking to allocate land for development, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) are no longer required for the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan.** This revised conclusion is consistent with that reached by New Forest District Council in relation to the majority of the Neighbourhood Area that lies within their planning jurisdiction.
- 5.2 The Authority's conclusion is based on the fact that the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan is not seeking to allocate land for development. The Government's NPPG recognises that assessments may be required where Neighbourhood Plans are seeking to deliver more development than that set out in the local authority's development plans. This is not the case with the Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan. The conclusions of this draft scoping report have been shared with the three statutory consultees in October 2018 and they have all confirmed in writing that they endorse the Authority's conclusions.
- 5.3 Table 2 of this report sets out an assessment as to whether the emerging Hythe & Dibden Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment. This assessment is based on the requirements of Regulation 9 and Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations and recognises the statutory nature of the Neighbourhood Plan; the reduced scope of the Neighbourhood Plan; and the value and vulnerability of the area (including national and internationally protected landscapes and habitats).
- 5.4 The scoping work undertaken on the HRA of the Authority's own Local Plan Review (2016-2036) recognises that even with the relatively low level of development proposed within the National Park, potential in-combination impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites within and adjacent to the New Forest cannot be ruled out. The HRA of the Authority's Local Plan assesses the scale of development set out in the draft Local Plan and it is important to recognise that the Neighbourhood Plan is now no longer proposing to allocate additional land for development over and above the Local Plan. Consequently, this screening report now concludes that in these circumstances an HRA is no longer required.