



Horsham
District
Council

Neighbourhood Development Plans: Sustainability Appraisals & Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) may be required for Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP's), where they are likely to cause significant environment effects. Some NDP's may also trigger the Habitats Directive.

It is the Council's opinion that where an NDP is to allocate land for development, there is potential for that development to have a significant effect on the environment then a Sustainability Appraisal should be undertaken to examine the effects.

Strategic Environmental Assessment:

Horsham District Councils' preferred approach is for a combined Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) to be carried out where the Screening Opinion indicates a SEA is required.

We recommend SA/SEA Scoping reports as per Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and National Planning Policy Guidance sets out

- Information on what the NDP is aiming to achieve.
- Information on plans and programs that influence the NDP (Table A1).
- Baseline data. HDC will share data/links as appropriate (Table A2).
- Identification of any existing environmental issues or problems in the designated area (A3).
- Identification of environmental SA/SEA objectives (A4). We recommend Reports highlight why certain issues are selected and to document why certain topic areas are scoped out.
- Consultation on the Scope of the SA/SEA (A5). We also recommend you outline the proposed methodology for undertaking the assessment.

We are happy to review and comment on DRAFT versions of the Scoping Report and Environmental Report prior to consultation with the statutory bodies. Parish Councils/Qualifying Bodies will manage consultation with the statutory bodies which include;

1. Environment Agency: Sustainable Places team, email address planningssd@environment-agency.gov.uk
2. Natural England: John Lister, email address john.lister@naturalengland.org.uk .
Angela Marlow, email address angela.marlow@naturalengland.org.uk
3. English Heritage: Email address policy@english-heritage.org.uk

Furthermore we recommend the Environmental Report will need to contain the above information and in addition will need to set out

- Test the NDP objectives against the SA/SEA objectives (B1).
- Commentary of how the NDP alternative options have been developed and refined Alternatives should demonstrate what has been considered and how. This could include an assessment of alternative sites as well as the policy options (B2).
- Consider what significant effects the NDP will have on the local environment - Reference should be made to para 6 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations as above (B3 & B4).
- Identification of mitigation measures to offset adverse effects where appropriate. If relevant we also recommend the identification of measures to maximise any potential benefits (B5).
- Information regarding monitoring of significant effects will need to be included, please note going forward this will be the responsibility of HDC therefore indicators will need to be of an appropriate scale. If additional localised indicators are specified please be aware this monitoring would be the responsibility of the Parish Council/Qualifying Body (B6).
- Non-technical summary.

Habitats Regulation Assessment:

Where a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) is required we would advise early consultation with Natural England.

The HRA for the Horsham District Planning Framework was undertaken by external consultants. Please be aware should a NDP require a HRA to be undertaken we do not have the expertise in house to review/comments on any aspect of the Assessment. We would recommend Natural England (as the competent authority) is contacted for further information and advice.