

Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan Request for Screening Opinion for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Introduction

This statement has been prepared by Test Valley Borough Council (as responsible authority) to determine whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and/or a Habitats Regulations Assessment are required for the draft Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan following the submission of a screening opinion.

The Regulations advise that where the responsible authority determines that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), it shall prepare a statement of its reasons for the determination. This statement fulfils that requirement.

Context

The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan involves a series of stages as required by legislation before it can be 'made'. To be 'made', a Neighbourhood Plan must meet certain Basic Conditions. These include that the making of the plan *"does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations"*.

One of these obligations is Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'. This is often referred to as the strategic environmental assessment (or SEA) Directive. The SEA Directive seeks *"to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes."* The SEA Directive is transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations') and it is these Regulations that the neighbourhood plan will need to be compatible with.

Another key obligation is Directive 92/43/EEC 'on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora', often referred to as the Habitats Directive. This has been translated into UK law via The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Under the 'Habitats Regulations' an assessment referred to as an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken if a Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European protected wildlife site.

Under both the SEA and Habitats Regulations it is the Council's role to advise whether further work is required once the first stage, a screening assessment, has been undertaken by the Parish Council on its Neighbourhood Plan.

Process

A screening report has been produced on behalf of Thruxton Parish Council (Annex A). This was submitted to the Council on the 8th January 2018. The report concluded that a full SEA would not be required. In accordance with the regulations, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency were consulted on the findings of the screening report. The consultation started on the 9th March for a five week period (deadline of 13th April 2018). A summary of the responses received and the Council's response is outlined in Table A. Copies of the responses are included at Annex B.

Table A: Summary of Responses

Consultation body (date of response)	Consultation response (summary)	Test Valley BC response
Environment Agency <i>5th April</i>	We note that the plan will not include any site allocations. 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.	Response noted
Natural England <i>11th April and 18th April</i>	<p>It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests are concerned (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils), there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.</p> <p>As the plan does not include any allocations for development, nor contain sensitive natural sites including European sites, and is unlikely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered through the Local Plan, an HRA is not required in this instance.</p>	Response noted
Historic England <i>11th April</i>	<p>At this stage we are prepared to agree with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's consultants that the policies and proposals of the Plan are unlikely to have significant impacts on the historic environment and that therefore the Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan need not be subject to strategic environmental assessment.</p> <p>However, when we see the draft Neighbourhood Plan, we may wish to review that opinion</p>	Response noted

Conclusion

Having regard to the letter and associated appendix submitted on behalf of the Parish Council (Annex A), the consultation responses from Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England indicated that having regard to the matters within their remit, the proposed Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to have significant environmental effects.

The Council has had due regard to the statutory consultee responses and the criteria within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations in coming to a view on whether the proposed Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. Based on the

summary of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan (as provided with the letter and its appendix), it is the Council's opinion that the Plan would not be likely to have significant environmental effects. On this basis, a Strategic Environmental Assessment would not be required for the proposed Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan.

With regards to the Habitats Regulations and whether an Appropriate Assessment is required, the Council concludes that the proposed Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on European designations. This is supported by the response from Natural England.

A response was sent to the Parish Council on the 23rd April 2018 (see Annex C).

09 March 2018

Mr Graham Smith
Head of Planning Policy
Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst
Andover
SP10 3AJ

Dear Graham,

Re: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion for Thruxton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

We have been asked by Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to request a Screening Opinion from Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) as to whether Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) are required for the Thruxton NDP.

The Thruxton NDP is being prepared by a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group appointed by the Parish Council and made up of local residents and Parish Councillors. The South Downs Neighbourhood and Community Planning Consultancy Services is helping with the drafting of the Pre-submission version of the NDP. It is intended that a Regulation 14 consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan will be carried out in April to June this year.

In order to help with the determination of whether SEA or HRA is required we have prepared a report attached as Appendix I to this letter which sets out:

- The scope of the Neighbourhood Plan; and
- Any sensitive areas and environmental issues present in Thruxton Neighbourhood Area or in the vicinity.

The report also considers whether there are likely to be any significant environmental effects from the plan. In this respect, the Thruxton NDP does not propose to allocate any sites. It is proposed to include policies that allow for a limited amount of development, in the form of windfall development, to come forward over the plan period to meet local needs, in conformity with the Test Valley Local Plan. The NDP is therefore unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

Please let me know if you require any further information and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Alma Howell

South Downs Neighbourhood and Community Planning Consultancy Services

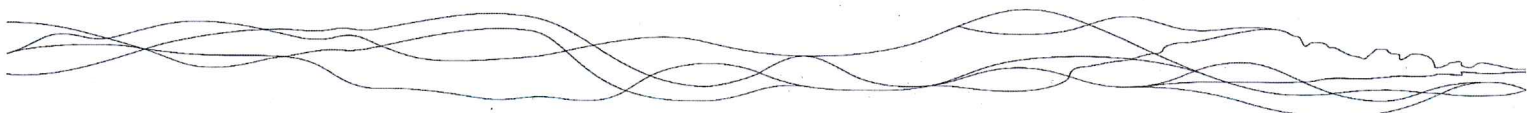
alma.howell@southdowns.gov.uk –

Tel: 01730 819309 / Mobile: 07866 961455

South Downs Centre, North Street,
Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH

T: 01730 814810
E: info@southdowns.gov.uk
www.southdowns.gov.uk

Chief Executive: Trevor Beattie



Appendix A – Screening Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening report is designed to help determine whether or not the Thruxton NDP requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001 / 42 / EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. It also seeks to help determine whether the plan is likely to have a significant effect on an International Site of Nature Conservation Importance, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and therefore whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment is required.
- 1.2 This report provides a summary of what the Thruxton NDP proposes to achieve; a summary of relevant environmental information; and an initial assessment of the potential for significant environmental effects.

2. Background

- 2.1 The basis for SEA and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is the European Directive 2001 / 42 / EC which was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations.
- 2.2 Whether a NDP requires a strategic environmental assessment, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the draft plan. A SEA may be required, for example where:
- A neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development;
 - The neighbourhood plan area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan; and
 - The neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan for the area.
- 2.3 When deciding on whether the proposals are likely to have significant effects, the local authority will consult with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency. Where the local planning authority determines that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment) it should prepare a statement of its reasons for the determination.
- 2.4 TVBC has prepared guidance for Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups on how to make a Screening Opinion request to them. This states that requests should be made at the earliest stage in the plan process as possible and should be accompanied by a report that includes a summary of what the plan is likely to propose and any environmental features of the Neighbourhood Plan area that the Neighbourhood Plan might affect. This is information set out below.

3. What the Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan is likely to propose

- 3.1 This Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) covers the whole of the Parish of Thruxton, a relatively small rural Parish situated within the District of Test Valley and County of Hampshire. The Parish includes the main village of Thruxton and three small settlements of Parkhouse Cross, Thruxton Down and the westerly side of Dauntsey Lane. A map showing the designated Neighbourhood Area can be found at the end of this report; Map I - Thruxton Neighbourhood Designated Area.
- 3.2 In 2016, Thruxton Parish Council appointed a Steering Group to engage with the community and produce a NDP for the Parish. The NDP will look ahead to 2029 to coincide with the plan period of the Test Valley Local Plan (TVLP) and will set out a vision for the future of the Parish and a number of objectives to deliver this vision.
- 3.3 The responses from the early engagement with the community on the NDP indicated a clear desire to protect the rural nature of Thruxton Parish and to support development at a small scale to meet local needs without intruding on the environment and heritage of the area. This led to the development of the following vision for the Parish.
- 3.4 *'The diverse landscape and heritage of the Parish will have been conserved and enhanced. Its rural feel and character will remain and the community will be a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy living in a safe, friendly and tranquil place.'*
- 3.5 The approach of the NDP is to planning positively for development and to encourage and support modest windfall proposals that can be satisfactorily accommodated within the settlements without undermining the quality of life for local people. Therefore NDP proposes to include a policy to support development within the settlement boundaries and which also responds to the local need for smaller properties.
- 3.6 This is consistent with TVBC Local Plan policy which seeks to meet housing needs in the most sustainable locations within the Test Valley area: these are the towns and larger villages with a range of services and transport links. As Thruxton has very few facilities and limited public transport provision, the village is not identified as a suitable location for strategic housing development in the Local Plan. Thruxton is classified as a rural settlement within the Test Valley settlement hierarchy, where the principle of development is supported within the settlement boundary which is defined in the Local Plan. A small area of Weyhill West settlement boundary is also within the Parish.
- 3.7 There was some large scale building in Thruxton village during the mid to late 20th century which doubled the size of the village. In more recent years, development in Thruxton has been strictly controlled and in the period 2000 to 2015 just 5 new homes were built in the village itself. There has also been some more recent development of single properties along Amesbury Road, Dauntsey Lane and at Thruxton Down. This can be taken as an indication of the modest scale of development that is likely to come forward within the plan period.
- 3.8 The NDP may also propose to include a policy that allows, in exceptional circumstances, some small scale development (10 houses or less) outside the settlement boundary that specifically addresses the needs of the Parish and is subject to very stringent criteria, so that local people can stay in the Parish. The level of need will be determined from the Thruxton Parish Housing Needs register and is likely to be relatively small given the overall size of the population in the

Parish and the level of need. Any development that arises from this policy will contribute to TVBC's windfall allowance.

- 3.9 Alongside this, the NDP will contain a number of policies covering a range of topics that seek to ensure that development proposals do not cause harm to, and where possible, enhance the landscape character and the local environment of Thruxton Parish.
- 3.10 The Landscape and Environment Chapter will highlight the importance of protecting and enhancing the open chalk landscape and valley bottom settlement character of the Parish as well as the range of biodiversity assets that are located here, such as chalk grassland, hedgerows, ponds and chalk watercourses. Local Green Spaces of value to the community will also be protected. This chapter will also contain policies that seek to help to reduce levels of pollution, particularly light pollution in the Thruxton Downs, noise and air from the A303 or Thruxton Airfield or water pollution of the Pillhill Brook and the risk of flooding throughout the Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.11 The Heritage Chapter will seek to protect and enhance the rich heritage and archaeology of the Parish and will include policies that identify and protect the special features of the Conservation Area. The NDP will seek to ensure that designated and undesignated archaeology is protected and given full consideration in any development proposals and its understanding and appreciation by the public is enhanced. It is also proposed to protect Local Parish Heritage Assets.

4. What are the key environmental designations and issues present in the Neighbourhood Area?

- 4.1 A key determinant of whether effects of a plan or proposal are likely to be significant is the sensitivity of the asset that could be affected. In this context, the more environmentally sensitive a location is, there is more likelihood that potential environmental effects from a plan will be significant.
- 4.2 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides guidance on this topic by giving a list of sites and areas which should be deemed as 'sensitive areas' for the purposes of environmental assessment. These comprise:
- Natura 2000 sites – including International Environmental Designations such as Special Protection Areas (SPA's) and Special Areas of Conservation SAC's);
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
 - National Parks;
 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - World Heritage Sites; and
 - Scheduled Monuments.
- 4.3 There are no Natura 2000 sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest within Thruxton Neighbourhood Area itself. Salisbury Plain SAC, SPA and SSSI and Porton Down SAC, SPA and SSSI are within approximately 7 kms of the designated Neighbourhood Area. Quarley Hill Fort SSSI is within approximately 4kms of the designated area.

- 4.4 There are other SSSIs further afield which include East Aston Common, Bransbury Common, Chilbolton Common, River Test, Broughton Down and Bentley Wood SSSIs.
- 4.5 The North Wessex Downs AONB is approximately 4kms from the designated Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 4.6 Potentially sensitive areas that lie in Thruxton designated Neighbourhood Area are:
- 4.7 There are three Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). These are identified below and shown on the Map 2 – Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation at the end of this report:
- Thruxton Hill
 - Codington Down
 - Mullens Pond
- 4.8 The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre identifies a number of Priority Habitats in the Parish. These are identified below and are shown on Map 3 – Priority Habitats attached at the end of this report:
- Mixed broadleaved deciduous woodland
 - Floodplain grazing marsh
 - Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures
 - Lowland Calcareous Grassland
 - Chalk watercourses
 - Ponds
- 4.9 There also a number of heritage designations with the Parish. These are shown on Map 4 - Thruxton Conservation Area attached at the end of this report.
- Thruxton Conservation Area was designated in 1985 and is focused on the historic core comprising the manorial complex and the medieval church. It also contains to the east and south, rows of houses and cottages, some dating from 15th century, but most from 18th and 19th centuries;
 - Most of the conservation area is designated as an Area of High Archaeological Potential;
 - There are 26 listed structures, including the grade I listed church of St Peter and St Paul;
 - The field with the Manorial Earthworks at the northwest corner of the Conservation Area is a a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument; and
 - A number of archaeological finds have been discovered throughout the Parish including at Thruxton Airfield which are recorded in the Hampshire Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record.

5. Potential for significant environmental effects

5.1 This section assesses the emerging NDP against each of the criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment, as defined in Schedule 1 to the 2004 Regulations.

Criteria	Assessment of the Thruxton NDP	Significant environmental effect?
I. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:		
(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 Thruxton NDP will contain a vision, objectives and series of policies that cover a range of themes that are important to the community.</p> <p>The policies in the NDP will focus on seeking to protect and enhance the existing rural and built character of the parish. The NDP will not propose to allocate any new sites for development.</p> <p>The NDP will provide a basis for decision-making in relation to development proposals in the Parish. Once the NDP has passed Referendum and is 'Made' it will become part of the Development Plan and will be used by TVBC, as the Local Planning Authority, to determine applications for planning permission. The NDP will also seek to guide any bids from the Parish for funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy through the identification of suitable community projects or aspirations.</p>	No
(b). The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	<p>The NDP, once passed Referendum and when 'Made', will form part of the formal Development Plan along with the TVLP and the Waste and Minerals Plan for the area. Planning applications will need to be in determined in accordance with the policies set out in the NDP.</p>	No
(c). The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of	<p>The NDP will seek to promote sustainable development and include policies to protect and enhance environmental and heritage features within the Parish. It will</p>	No

Criteria	Assessment of the Thruxton NDP	Significant environmental effect?
environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	<p>therefore have a positive effect on environmentally sensitive areas, as well as addressing local issues and adding local distinctive detail to the TVLP policies and those in the NPPF.</p> <p>Any planning application will need to be in accordance with the environmental protection policies of the NDP, the TVLP and the NPPF, which seek to achieve sustainable development.</p>	
(d). Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	<p>Thruxton Parish has localised flooding issues especially near Pilhill Brook, Mullens Pond, Village Street, and Amesbury Road.</p> <p>The A303 is a source of significant noise pollution and also air pollution in those areas closest to it. The A303 has been identified by DEFRA as a Noise Important Area i.e. a noise hotspot. DEFRA has produced a Noise Action Plan to look at ways of addressing this issue.</p> <p>In addition there are concerns by residents with regards to pollution to watercourses, lack of capacity for waste water drainage and light pollution in the Thruxton Downs.</p> <p>The NDP will include policies and community actions to: reduce the risk of flooding; to protect the natural functioning of Pilhill Brook; promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs); and to reduce levels pollution, where possible.</p>	No
(e). The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment	<p>The NDP will contain policies to protect and enhance the natural and built environment, including biodiversity and heritage assets and to also minimise pollution.</p> <p>The NDP will explain that Heritage Lottery</p>	No

Criteria	Assessment of the Thruxton NDP	Significant environmental effect?
(for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	<p>Funding has been committed to celebrating and protecting the headwaters of the River Test. The project involves working with communities such as Thruxton which are on the headwater streams (including the Pillhill Brook). This project provides a good opportunity for the community to identify measures to restore wildlife habitats, celebrate local heritage and identify actions individuals can take to improve our local watercourses. Policies in the NDP will seek to support the aims of this project.</p> <p>The NDP will also contain a number of community projects or aspirations which the community is seeking to deliver in partnership with other organisations.</p>	
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:		
(a). The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	<p>The NDP will contain policies whose main focus is the protection and enhancement of the existing character of the village and surrounding countryside. It will not allocate sites for development instead relying on a small amount of windfall development to come forward to meet the housing needs of the local community.</p> <p>The overall effect of the NDP, given its focus on environmental protection and enhancement, is therefore expected to be positive.</p>	No
(b). The cumulative nature of the effects;	<p>The NDP does not propose to allocate any sites for development therefore there will not be any cumulative effects arising from in-combination effects with any other Neighbourhood Plans or Local Plans.</p> <p>Instead, the NDP will add locally distinctive value to the policies in the TVLP and the NPPF relating to the protection and enhancement of important local environmental designations and heritage</p>	No

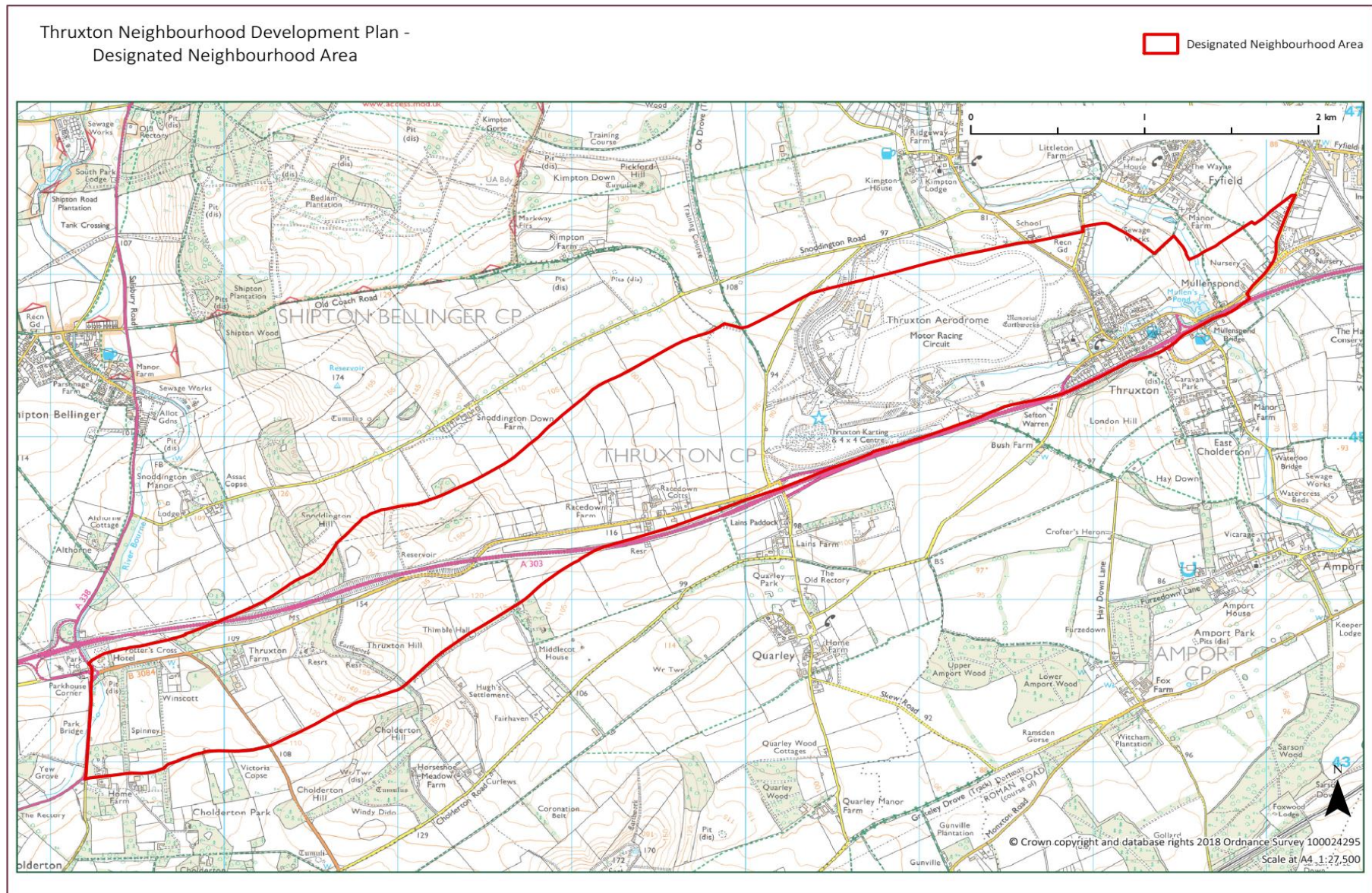
Criteria	Assessment of the Thruxton NDP	Significant environmental effect?
	features in the Neighbourhood Area.	
(c). The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	There are considered to be no risks to human health arising from the NDP. The NDP will seek to improve pedestrian safety and reduce the impacts of pollution in the Neighbourhood Area.	No
(d). The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	The NDP will cover the Parish boundary. This extends to 663 hectares, comprising 1% of the total Test Valley area. The Parish has an estimated 2016 population of 634. The NDP has a local focus and as a result the overall environmental effects of the Plan, which are overall expected to be positive, will be relatively limited in magnitude and spatial extent.	No
(e). The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: (i). Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii). Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii). Intensive land-use; and	(i). There are a number of special natural characteristics and cultural heritage features that are located in and within the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Area. These are out in detail in section 4 of this report. The value and vulnerability of these will not be affected by the NDP. Instead the NDP will overall have a positive impact. (ii). The NDP will not result in any environmental quality standards to be exceeded or limit value. The NDP will include a policy to protect local watercourses, and to reduce the levels of pollution in the Parish. (iii). No intensive land use is proposed in the NDP.	No

Criteria	Assessment of the Thruxton NDP	Significant environmental effect?
(f). The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	<p>The NDP does not propose to allocate housing sites and therefore it is unlikely to have any significant effect on International sites at Salisbury Plain and Porton Down SPAs and SACs in terms of increased visitor pressure or increased air pollution as a result of additional traffic. It will also not have any negative impacts on SSSI's that are located in the vicinity of the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>The NDP will contain policies to protect the local Chalk Downland and Pilhill Brook Valley Floor Landscape Character Areas, SINC's, important Priority Habitats such as chalk grassland, hedgerows, ponds and chalk watercourses and other biodiversity and heritage features in the Neighbourhood Area. The NDP is therefore likely to have a positive effect on the natural and built environment generally.</p>	No

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The overall conclusion from the above table is that the proposed Thruxton NDP is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and therefore does not require SEA.
- 6.2 In respect of HRA, the nearest International designations are Salisbury Plain SAC and SPA and Porton Down SAC and SPA which are approximately 7km away from the designated Neighbourhood Area. As the NDP does not propose to allocate any sites, there is unlikely to be any significant environmental effects on these areas in terms of increased visitor pressure or pollution arising from additional traffic.

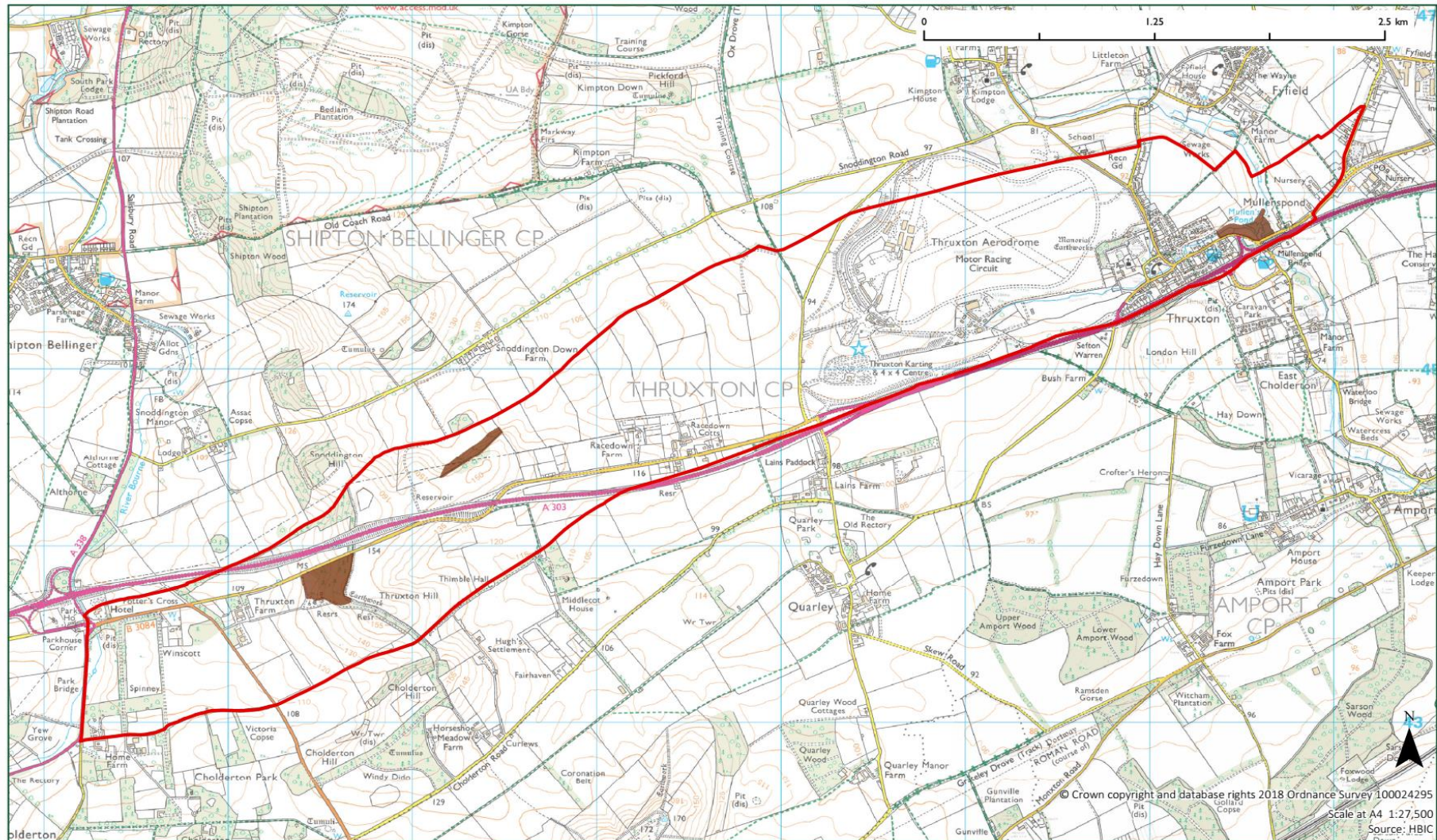
MAP I: THRUXTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGNATED AREA



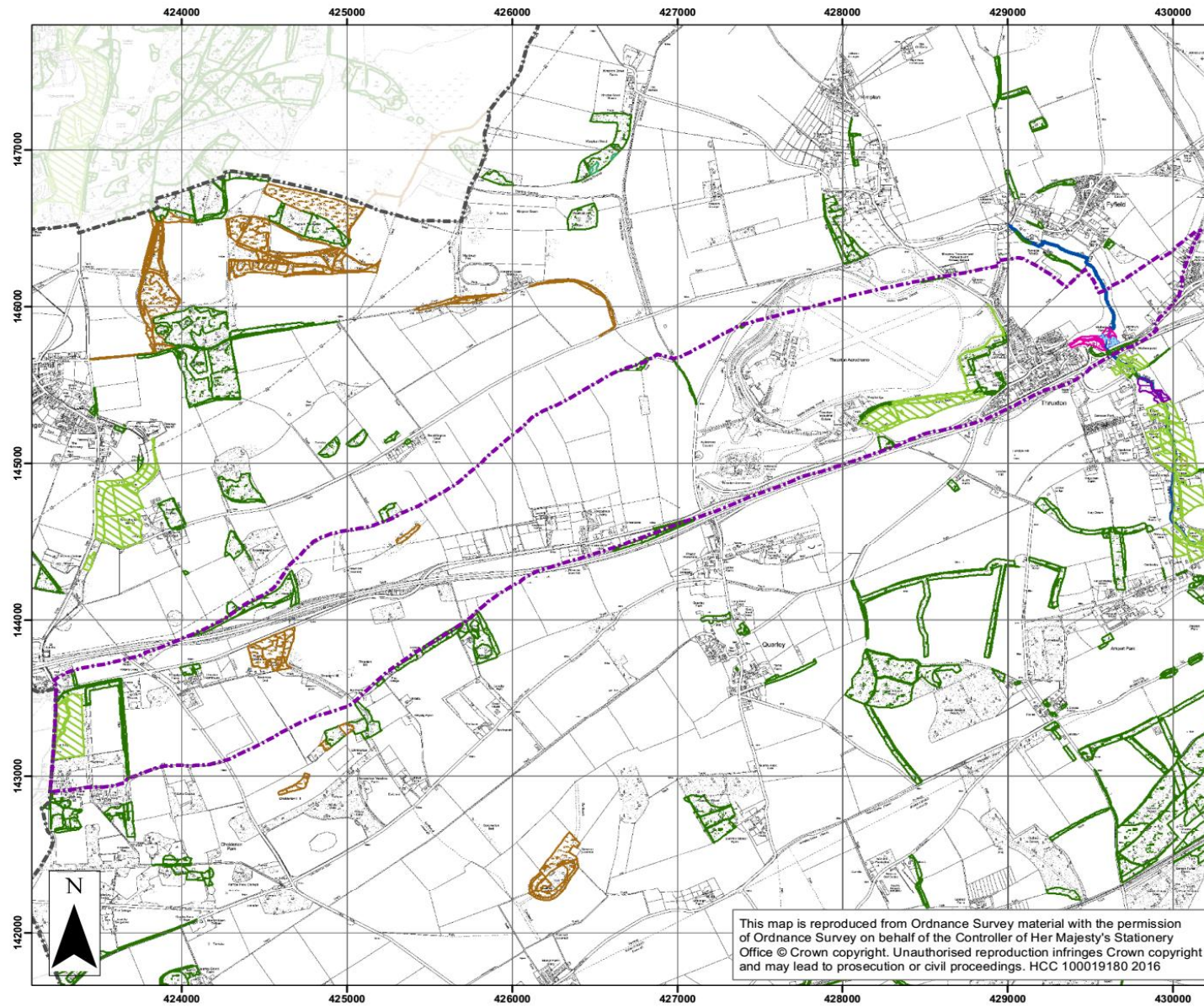
MAP 2: SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

Thruxton Neighbourhood Development Plan -
Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

 Designated Neighbourhood Area  Site of Importance for Nature Conservation



MAP 3: PRIORITY HABITATS



Hampshire Biodiversity
Information Centre

HBIC Ref: 6457

Priority Habitat Information
within the Parish of Thruxton:

(see explanatory note for
details of the origin and
accuracy of this data)

Legend

- Thruxton Parish
- Hampshire County Boundary
- Chalk Rivers

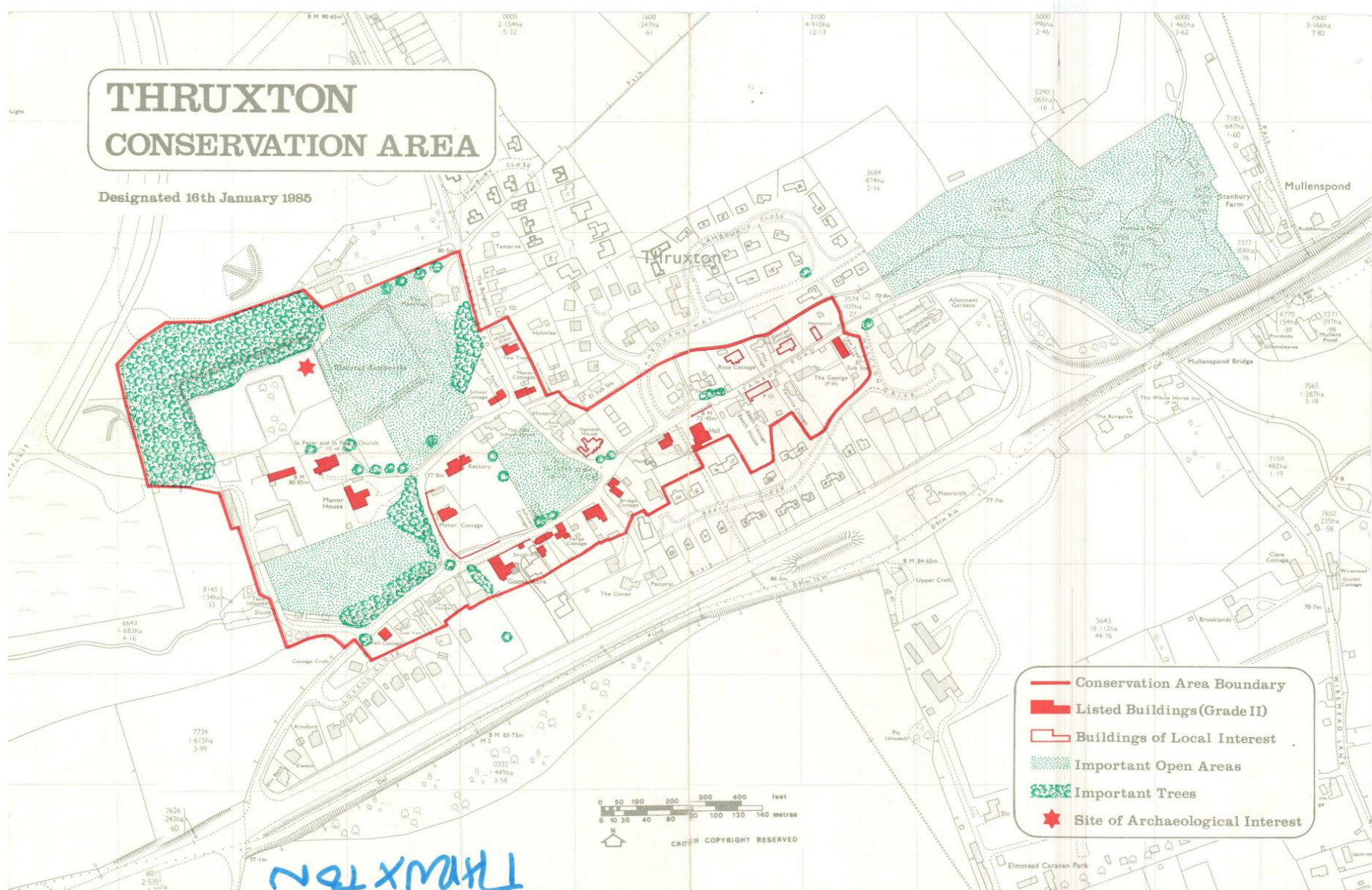
Some Habitats may overlap.
Please see 'UK Habitats
Legend' for full Legend, there
is a link to this in your covering
letter.

Date created: 10/10/2016

Scale at A3: 1:23,000

010000 400 600 800 1,000
Meters

MAP 4: THRUXTON – CONSERVATION AREA



From: Lax, Laura <laura.lax@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Sent: 05 April 2018 13:19
To: Smith, Graham
Cc: Lines, Charlotte A.
Subject: FW: Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan - Screening Opinion SEA & HRA
Attachments: Request for Screening Opinion for SEA and HRA - Thruxton Neighbourhood P....pdf

Dear Graham

Thank you for consulting us on the SEA screening opinion for the Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan. We note that the plan will not include any site allocations. 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.

Kind regards
Laura

Laura Lax
Sustainable Places
Solent and South Downs

Tel: 0208 4745902
Email: laura.lax@environment-agency.gov.uk

From: Smith, Graham [<mailto:GSmith@TestValley.gov.uk>]
Sent: 09 March 2018 15:19
To: FWDNaturalEngland <consultations@naturalengland.org.uk>; PlanningSSD <PlanningSSD@environment-agency.gov.uk>; 'e-seast@historicEngland.org.uk' <e-seast@historicEngland.org.uk>
Subject: Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan - Screening Opinion SEA & HRA

Dear Sir/Madam,

A request for a screening opinion has been submitted on behalf of Thruxton Parish Council neighbourhood plan group as to whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment are required for their draft neighbourhood plan.

The covering letter and screening report are attached as one pdf.

Please let me have any comments or requirements which you may have as soon as possible but in any event by 13th April 2018 (5 weeks). If no response is received within this period it will be assumed that your organisation has no comment to make.

If you have any queries on the application or the timescale for comments, please contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Graham Smith
Head of Planning Policy
Test Valley Borough Council
Tel: 01264 368141
gsmith@testvalley.gov.uk



Think of the environment...please don't print this e-mail *unless you really need to*

The information in this e-mail is confidential. The content may not be disclosed or used by anyone other than the intended recipient. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the Council's Data Protection Administrator immediately on 01264 368000. Test Valley Borough Council cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of this message as it has been transmitted over a public network. If you suspect that the message may have been intercepted or amended, please call the Data Protection Administrator on the above phone number. The content of this e-mail, whether marked confidential or otherwise, may have to be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. No employee, Councillor or agent is authorised to conclude by e-mail any binding agreement with another party on behalf of Test Valley Borough Council. The Council does not accept service by e-mail of court proceedings, other processes or formal notices of any kind without specific prior written agreement.

This message has been scanned and no issues were discovered.

Click [here](#) to report this email as spam

Information in this message may be confidential and may be legally privileged. If you have received this message by mistake, please notify the sender immediately, delete it and do not copy it to anyone else.

We have checked this email and its attachments for viruses. But you should still check any attachment before opening it.

We may have to make this message and any reply to it public if asked to under the Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act or for litigation. Email messages and attachments sent to or from any Environment Agency address may also be accessed by someone other than the sender or recipient, for business purposes.

Click [here](#) to report this email as spam

Date: 11 April 2018
Our ref: 241210
Your ref: Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan Screening



Graham Smith
Head of Planning
Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst
Andover SP10 3AJ

Customer Services
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

By email only: planning@testvalley.gov.uk

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Graham,

Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan – Screening Opinion SEA and HRA

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 9 March 2018 which was received by Natural England on 9 March 2018.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment

It is our advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, in so far as our strategic environmental interests are concerned (including but not limited to statutory designated sites, landscapes and protected species, geology and soils), there are unlikely to be significant environmental effects from the proposed plan.

Neighbourhood Plan

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans in light of the SEA Directive is contained within the National Planning Practice Guidanceⁱ. The guidance highlights three triggers that may require the production of an SEA, for instance where:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

We have checked our records and based on the information provided, we can confirm that in our view the proposals contained within the plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

We are not aware of significant populations of protected species which are likely to be affected by the policies / proposals within the plan. It remains the case, however, that the responsible authority should provide information supporting this screening decision, sufficient to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected.

Notwithstanding this advice, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all potential environmental assets. As a result the responsible authority should raise environmental issues that we have not identified on local or national biodiversity action plan species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites or local landscape character, with its own ecological and/or landscape advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local landscape and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by this plan, before determining whether an SA/SEA is necessary.

Please note that Natural England reserves the right to provide further comments on the environmental assessment of the plan beyond this SEA/SA screening stage, should the responsible authority seek our views on the scoping or environmental report stages. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact **Sarah Skinner** on **07813593588**. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Skinner

Adviser Planning and Sustainable Development
Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Area Team

From: Skinner, Sarah (NE) <sarah.skinner@naturalengland.org.uk>
Sent: 18 April 2018 16:31
To: Smith, Graham
Subject: RE: 241210 2018004-13 Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan - Screening Opinion SEA & HRA (Test Valley)

Dear Graham,

Yes, my response refers to SEA and HRA as in the title of the letter, but I notice that subsequent paragraphs have not referred to HRA specifically. As the plan does not include any allocations for development, nor contain sensitive natural sites including European sites, and is unlikely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered through the Local Plan, an HRA is not required in this instance.

I hope that clarifies it, thank you for the query.

Kind Regards
Sarah

Sarah Skinner
Planning and Conservation Adviser
Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Team (Area 13)

sarah.skinner@naturalengland.org.uk
Mobile 07813 593588

(current working week 4 days)

www.gov.uk/natural-england

We are here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

In an effort to reduce Natural England's carbon footprint, I will, wherever possible, avoid travelling to meetings and attend via audio, video or web conferencing.

From: Smith, Graham [mailto:GSmith@TestValley.gov.uk]
Sent: 18 April 2018 14:06
To: Skinner, Sarah (NE) <sarah.skinner@naturalengland.org.uk>
Subject: FW: 241210 2018004-13 Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan - Screening Opinion SEA & HRA (Test Valley)

Dear Sarah,
Thank you for the response regarding the screening opinion for the Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan. I note that your response covers the SEA element but does not specifically comment on the HRA element. The parish submission (reattached for convenience) does cover both SEA and HRA. I just want to check that as you've responded that there is unlikely to be any significant effect on the environment you therefore think that HRA is not required? Is this correct? Have I understood correctly?
Thanks in advance,
Kind regards,
Graham

From: Ewence, Suzanne
Sent: 13 April 2018 09:31

To: Smith, Graham

Subject: FW: 241210 2018004-13 Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan - Screening Opinion SEA & HRA (Test Valley)

F.Y.I.

From: Skinner, Sarah (NE) [<mailto:sarah.skinner@naturalengland.org.uk>]

Sent: 11 April 2018 17:47

To: Planning User

Subject: 241210 2018004-13 Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan - Screening Opinion SEA & HRA (Test Valley)

Dear Graham

Thank you for consulting Natural England for a SEA Screening Opinion on Thruxton NDP. We concur with the conclusion that there are unlikely to be any significant effects on sensitive sites from the proposed plan. Please find the letter attached.

Kind Regards

Sarah

Sarah Skinner

Adviser, Conservation Delivery, Planning
Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Team (Area 13)

sarah.skinner@naturalengland.org.uk

Mobile 07813 593588

(current working week 4 days)

www.gov.uk/natural-england

We are here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

In an effort to reduce Natural England's carbon footprint, I will, wherever possible, avoid travelling to meetings and attend via audio, video or web conferencing.

This email and any attachments is intended for the named recipient only. If you have received it in error you have no authority to use, disclose, store or copy any of its contents and you should destroy it and inform the sender. Whilst this email and associated attachments will have been checked for known viruses whilst within the Natural England systems, we can accept no responsibility once it has left our systems. Communications on Natural England systems may be monitored and/or recorded to secure the effective operation of the system and for other lawful purposes.

The information in this e-mail is confidential. The content may not be disclosed or used by anyone other than the intended recipient. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the Council's Data Protection Administrator immediately on 01264 368000. Test Valley Borough Council cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of this message as it has been transmitted over a public network. If you suspect that the message may have been intercepted or amended, please call the Data Protection Administrator on the above phone number.

The content of this e-mail, whether marked confidential or otherwise, may have to be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. No employee, Councillor or agent is authorised to conclude by e-mail any binding agreement with another party on behalf of Test Valley Borough Council. The Council does not accept service by e-mail of court proceedings, other processes or formal notices of any kind without specific prior written agreement.

This email and any attachments is intended for the named recipient only. If you have received it in error you have no authority to use, disclose, store or copy any of its contents and you should destroy it and inform the sender. Whilst this email and associated attachments will have been checked for known viruses whilst within the Natural England systems, we can accept no responsibility once it has left our systems.

Communications on Natural England systems may be monitored and/or recorded to secure the effective operation of the system and for other lawful purposes.



Historic England

Mr Graham Smith
Head of Planning Policy
Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst
Andover

Our ref: HD/P5240/
Your ref:
Telephone 01483 252040
Fax

11th April 2018

Dear Mr Smith,

Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan - SEA and HRA Screening Opinion

Thank you for your e-mail of 9th March seeking the views of Historic England on whether or not the policies and proposals of the Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan are likely to have significant environmental effects and therefore whether or not it should be subject to strategic environmental assessment.

The parish contains 26 listed buildings, including the Grade I Church of St Peter and Paul, a conservation area, a scheduled monument, an Area of High Archaeological Potential and potentially a number of locally important heritage assets. It is, therefore, a very sensitive historic environment which may be affected by any development promoted or allowed for by the Neighbourhood Plan.

We understand that it is not intended that the Plan will allocate any sites for housing or other development. However, we note from the Screening Report that it is proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan will include a policy to support development within the settlement boundaries, and that it may also include a policy that would allow, in exceptional circumstances, some small scale development (10 houses or less) outside the settlement boundary that specifically addresses the needs of the Parish and is subject to very stringent criteria (although those criteria are not specified).

Potentially, therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan could allow unconstrained development within the settlement boundaries (which include the areas of highest historic significance) and a number of developments outside the settlement boundary, which could also impinge on the significance of heritage assets. The development of 10 houses in the wrong location could have a very significant effect on the historic environment, and there would also be the potential for a significant cumulative effect.

If the policy were to allow development around the built up area with no caveats regarding impact on the significance, special interest, character and appearance of heritage assets and no specific policy for the conservation and enhancement of



Historic England, Eastgate Court, 195-205 High Street, Guildford GU1 3EH

Telephone 01483 25 2020 HistoricEngland.org.uk

Please note that Historic England operates an access to information policy.

Correspondence or information which you send us may therefore become publicly available.



heritage assets, we would be likely to consider that there is sufficient likelihood of significant impacts on the historic environment to warrant a requirement for strategic environmental assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan (bearing in mind that “likelihood” and “significant” are actually quite low thresholds).

However, the “very stringent criteria” for a policy allowing development outside the settlement boundary could include a criterion requiring there to be no harm to the significance or special interest, character or appearance of heritage assets.

We also note that, according to the Screening Opinion, the Heritage Chapter will seek to protect and enhance the rich heritage and archaeology of the Parish, will include policies that identify and protect the special features of the Conservation Area and will seek to protect Local Parish Heritage Assets.

Depending on how robust and comprehensive these policies are, they could be sufficient to ensure that, in principle, at least, no site within or outside the settlement boundary would be allowed to be developed if it would harm the significance or special interest, character and appearance of a heritage asset.

At this stage we are prepared to agree with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group’s consultants that the policies and proposals of the Plan are unlikely to have significant impacts on the historic environment and that therefore the Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan need not be subject to strategic environmental assessment.

However, when we see the draft Neighbourhood Plan, we may wish to review that opinion.

We hope these comments are helpful. Please contact me if you have any queries.

Thank you again for consulting Historic England.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Small
Principal Adviser, Historic Environment Planning
(Bucks, Oxon, Berks, Hampshire, IoW, South Downs and New Forest National Parks and Chichester)

E-mail: martin.small@historicengland.org.uk





Kate Phillipson
Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan Group

BY EMAIL ONLY

Chief Executive's Service
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road
Andover, Hampshire SP10 3AJ
Telephone 01264 368000
Minicom 01264 368052
Web site www.testvalley.gov.uk

Contact: Mr Graham Smith
Telephone: 01264 368000
E-mail: planningpolicy@testvalley.gov.uk
Your ref:
Our ref: pp11.9
Date: 23.04.18

Dear Kate,

**Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan
Request for Screening Opinion for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

I write in response to your request, submitted on your behalf by the South Downs Neighbourhood and Community Planning Consultancy Services, for a screening opinion for Strategic Environmental Assessment in relation to the proposed Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan. This request was received by the Council on the 9th March 2018.

Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 requires that the responsible authority (Test Valley Borough Council) shall determine whether or not a plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. As part of making this assessment, the responsible authority shall —

- (a) take into account the criteria specified in Schedule 1 to these Regulations; and
- (b) consult the consultation bodies.

The Regulations advise that where the responsible authority determines that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), it shall prepare a statement of its reasons for the determination. This statement will be published on our website in due course.

Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England, as the statutory consultation bodies for the Regulations, were consulted on this SEA screening request. The consultation started on 9th March 2018 for a five week period, ending on 13th April 2018.

Having reviewed the letter and associated appendix that you provided, the consultation responses from Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England indicated that having regard to the matters within their remit, the proposed Neighbourhood Plan would not be likely to have significant environmental effects.

The Council has had due regard to the statutory consultee responses and the criteria within Schedule 1 of the Regulations in coming to a view on whether the proposed Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. Based on the summary of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan (as provided within the Briefing Note), it is the Council's opinion that the Plan would not be likely to have significant environmental effects. On this basis, a Strategic Environmental Assessment would not be required for the proposed Thruxton Neighbourhood Plan.

With regards to the Habitats Regulations Assessment and whether an Appropriate Assessment is required, the Council concludes that the proposed Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on European designations. This is supported by the response from Natural England.

You are advised that if the anticipated vision and scope of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan are subject to significant change, it would be appropriate to review the Screening Opinion and the position regarding the Habitat Regulations Assessment.

Yours sincerely

Graham Smith
Head of Planning Policy