



**Screening Statement on the determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental
Assessment / Habitat Regulations Assessment for the emerging Lymington & Pennington
Neighbourhood Plan**

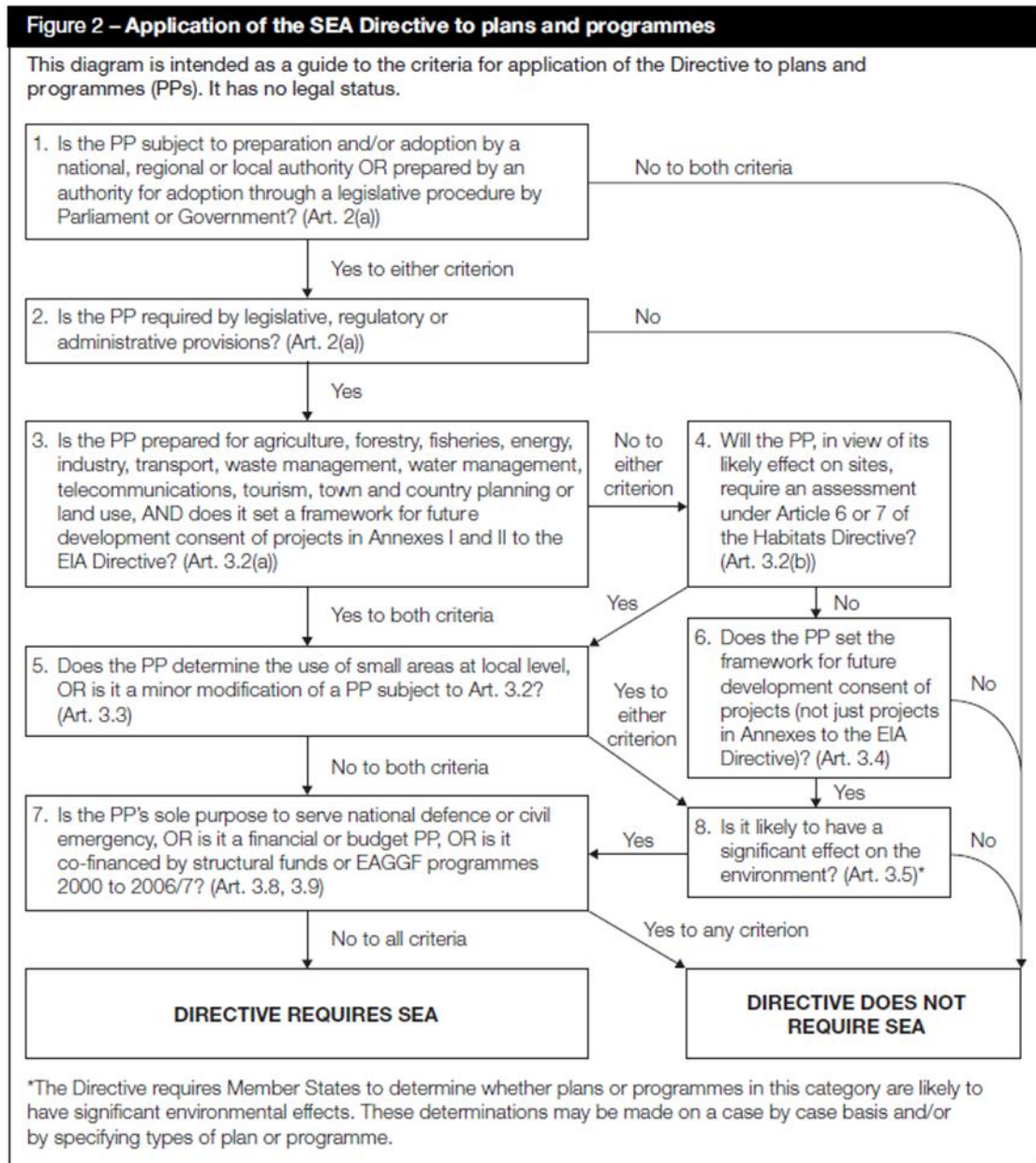
March 2017

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The whole of the parish of Lymington & Pennington 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 Lymington & Pennington Town 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 19 January 2017 Lymington & Pennington Town 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. A similar request had been made previously to New Forest District Council regarding the majority of the designated Neighbourhood Area that falls within the District Council's planning remit.
- 1.4 The Town Council's letter confirms that while the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to allocate site for development, none of these are likely to be within the boundary of the National Park. The Town Council also indicates that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to contain policies that may affect sensitive natural or heritage assets located in or close proximity to the Neighbourhood Area. This includes the internationally designated nature conservation sites covering the heathland habitats of the New Forest and the Solent coastline.
- 1.5 The Authority's screening opinion is 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').
- 1.6 This report sets out the National Park Authority's formal screening opinion on whether the emerging Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan 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.
- 1.7 The screening process undertaken by the National Park Authority has been based on the established criteria. The Authority has also consulted with New Forest District Council (who has recently gone through the same process for their respective part of the designated Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Area), Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England. The results of this screening process are publicly available.

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 already taken by New Forest District Council in determining whether the emerging Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects.



- 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 Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 1: Application of SEA Directive to the Lymington & Pennington 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 Lymington & Pennington Town 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>	Yes	The Lymington & Pennington 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 Lymington & Pennington. These projects are potentially of a scale referred to in Article 4(2) of the EIA Directive (listed at Annex II of the Directive). It is recognised that larger sites are unlikely to be within the National Park and that some sites will be assessed through the SA/SEA of the New Forest District Local Plan Review. In conclusion, the Neighbourhood Plan is setting a framework for future development of a potentially significant scale.
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>	Yes	Given the wealth of internationally protected habitats within and immediately adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan Area (including the New Forest and Solent Natura 2000 sites), at this stage it is concluded that the Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan could potentially have uncertain or significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Opinion that follows in Section 3 provides more detail on this.
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>	No	The Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan will determine the use of sites at a wider than small area / local level. The parish of Lymington & Pennington extends to approximately 16 square kilometres (7 square kilometres of which lie within the National Park) and the Neighbourhood Plan as a whole is likely to allocate sites for development at a potentially significant scale.

6. 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)	Yes	Once adopted, the Lymington & Pennington 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.
7. 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)	No	N/A
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	Yes	Given the statutory nature of the Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan; the range of environmental designations within the parish of Lymington & Pennington; and the likely scale of development that the Plan is seeking to provide a planning framework for; it is concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) due to the potential for significant effects upon the environment.

- 2.3 The Government's National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) resource recognises that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (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. The National Park Authority has concluded that this is the case with the emerging Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan. 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 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 Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan would, 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 Lymington & Pennington 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 Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan is likely to contain policies relating to environmental considerations such as biodiversity, the historic environment and sustainability. The Town Council's screening request acknowledges that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to contain policies that may affect sensitive natural heritage assets located in or in proximity to the Neighbourhood Area (including internationally designated nature conservation sites). The parish includes a wealth of natural and built environmental designations that will be key considerations in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. The NPPF 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>	As outlined above, the designated Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Area includes 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. - New Forest Special Protection Area (SPA)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - New Forest Ramsar - Solent and Southampton Water SPA - Solent Maritime SAC - Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar - National SSSI designations (including Hurst Castle & Lymington River Estuary SSSI, Lymington River Reedbeds SSSI, Lymington River SSSI, and New Forest SSSI). The Lymington & Keyhaven Marshes are a designated Local Nature Reserve. <p>The Neighbourhood Area is also affected by flooding (groundwater, fluvial and coastal), with significant parts of the coastline of the Parish (the majority of which lies within the National Park) at risk from flooding.</p> <p>On this basis it is concluded that the Lymington and Pennington Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to have significant effects on the environment, which should be assessed in reviewing potential development sites.</p>
<i>(e) 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>	The Lymington and Pennington Neighbourhood Plan is not directly relevant to any of these.
2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
<i>(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;</i>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan will need to consider all environmental effects – some may be considered to be significant. Chapter 7 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal & SEA Scoping Report (June 2016) sets out the key sustainability issues and how these may be affected by Local Plan policies and this Scoping Report will be a useful source of information for the emerging Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan. Chapter 6 of the Scoping Report sets out the 'State of the Park - baseline information and trends' and covers biodiversity, landscape character, tranquillity and environmental quality, all of which provide useful information for the SEA process.</p> <p>The New Forest National Park Local Plan Review HRA scoping work undertaken in 2016 has so far identified the following potential effects from development either within the National Park, or in combination with development proposed in</p>

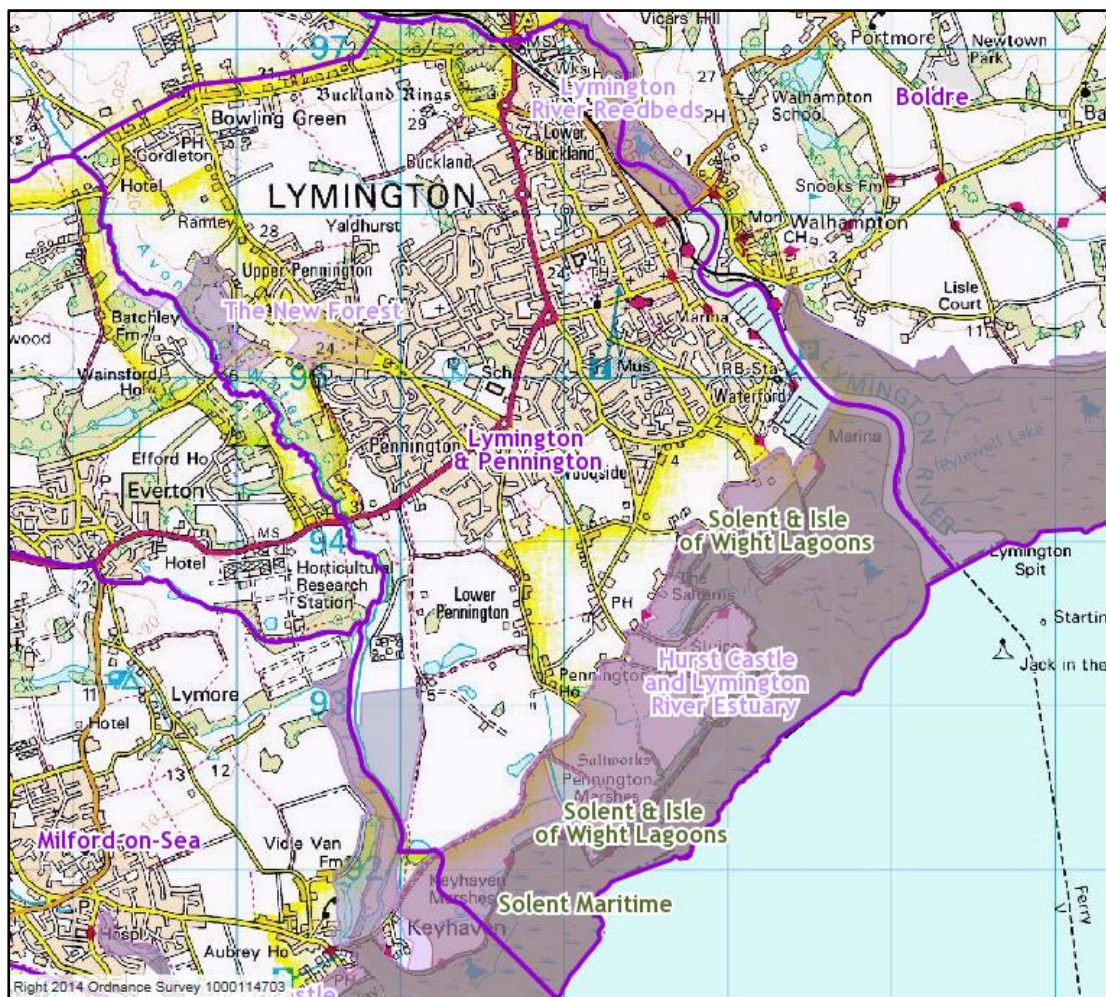
	<p>surrounding areas that would need to be considered:</p> <p><u>Direct loss or physical damage due to construction:</u> The potential for development sites to result in loss of habitat which lies outside European site boundaries but which is used by the qualifying bird populations of Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar site; Dorset Heathlands SPA; New Forest SPA; or Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site will require more detailed consideration in the HRA. 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.</p> <p><u>Disturbance and other urban edge effects from construction or occupation of buildings:</u> It is not possible to rule out the potential for urban edge effects such as pet predation from new residential development within 400 metres 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 more than 400 metres from the designated Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Area at its nearest point and therefore this potential effect can be ruled out at this stage. As noted below, the whole of the Neighbourhood Area lies within the 5.6km catchment for the Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA, and Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar sites.</p> <p><u>Recreational pressure:</u> The emerging Local Plan HRA work assumes that, prior to mitigation, likely significant effects in-combination cannot be ruled out for: (i) any residential development or visitor accommodation within New Forest National Park on the New Forest SAC and SPA; and (ii) any residential development or visitor accommodation within 5.6km of the Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA, and Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site.</p> <p><u>Changes in water quality:</u> 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.</p> <p>Further assessment work is required on these identified issues.</p>
(b) <i>the cumulative nature of the effects;</i>	To be determined, but likely to be significant. The HRA Screening Report for the New Forest National Park Local Plan Review 2016 – 2036 highlights the cumulative, in-combination impacts of development around the New Forest's Natura 2000 sites as potentially significant.

(c) <i>the transboundary nature of the effects;</i>	The effects of the Plan are unlikely to have transboundary impacts (i.e. other Member States).
(d) <i>the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);</i>	There are no significant risks to human health or the environment.
(e) <i>the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</i>	The full Neighbourhood Plan Area covers a medium sized town (Lymington, population circa 15,000 people) and smaller adjoining settlements (e.g. Pennington). The total area of the designated Neighbourhood Area is approximately 16 square kilometres, of which approximately 7 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.
(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> (ii) <i>exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or</i> (iii) <i>intensive land-use; and</i>	As previously highlighted, there are a significant number of international nature conservation sites within or adjoining the Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Area, as well as the Lymington & Keyhaven Nature Reserve. These sites are vulnerable to impacts, as set out in the assessment against criteria 2(a) above. The area also contains a rich built heritage, with three Conservation Areas within the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area (Buckland (with straddles the Park boundary), Lymington, and Kings Saltern). In addition, the Forest South East Conservation Area is located immediately to the east of the Neighbourhood Area within the National Park and the Keyhaven Conservation Area is located close to the south west boundary of the parish. Around 40% 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.
(g) <i>the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</i>	As outlined above, there are a range of designated habitats within or adjacent to the Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Area that have been protected at national and international level. In addition, around 40% of the designated Lymington & Pennington 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 National 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.

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 Lymington & Pennington Town Council has also sought a formal 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 Lymington & Pennington area.



Key:

	Parish Boundary
	National Park Boundary
	Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) & Ramsar sites - named in green writing; Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) named in purple writing

- 3.2 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 is consistent with that already taken by New Forest District

Council in their screening opinion to the Town Council relating to the majority of the parish that lies within the District Council's planning remit. It also recognises that the Lymington & Pennington 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 Lymington & Pennington 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) is currently being prepared for the submission version of the New Forest National Park Local Plan Review (2016-2036). This assessment is being prepared in consultation with Natural England and other bodies. The current draft version of the Authority's draft Local Plan sets out proposals for 700 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 emerging 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 highlighted the response to point 2(a) in Table 2 (pages 7 – 8) and 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 more than 400 metres

from the designated Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Area at its nearest point and therefore this potential effect can 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.

- 3.6 **In line with the HRA scoping work on the Authority's own Local Plan, it is concluded that the emerging Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan does require a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).** This is based on the range of designated habitats within and adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan Area and the recognition in existing HRA scoping work of their sensitivities to the impacts of development. The HRA scoping work in the National Park has for example, identified the potential impacts of recreational pressure on the integrity of the New Forest's Natura 2000 sites from any development within the National Park. Given the potential scale of development proposed through the emerging Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan an HRA would be required (as it is for other statutory development plans being prepared for the area by the National Park Authority and New Forest District Council).

4 Statutory Consultees

4.1 The National Park Authority's initial 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 16 February 2017. The statutory consultees were asked to respond by 9 March 2017. The draft screening opinion was also shared with New Forest District Council who has responded to a similar screening request from Lymington & Pennington Town Council relating to the majority of the parish that lies within the District Council's planning remit. Set out below is a summary of the consultation responses received.

- Environment Agency (received 17.02.17): Flood risk will need to be considered as part of the assessments of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. Fluvial and groundwater flooding are mentioned under section '(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme'. In addition to this parts of the Lymington & Pennington area are at risk of coastal flooding. Flood risk assessments will therefore need to inform the Neighbourhood Plan if sites are allocated. Additional detailed comments included:
 - Request that any funding secured through CIL apportionment is allocated to environmental infrastructure, including flood risk and coastal erosion management which is required to support sustainable growth.
 - Advice that policies for new development should set out strong requirements for water efficiency measures.
- Historic England (received 08.03.17): Agree with the National Park Authority's opinion that the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan should be accompanied by preparation of an environmental report. This is based on the fact that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to allocate land for development which could have a permanent or long term impact on heritage assets, both directly and indirectly (through impacts on their settings). Historic England also advised that it would be helpful if the screening opinion identified the presence of heritage assets, in order that this is effectively scoped in to further phases of preparation of the report.
- Natural England (received 22.02.17): Based on the screening opinion from the National Park Authority, Natural England concurred with the conclusions that HRA/SEA will be required.

4.2 The consultation comments received from the statutory consultees in February and early March 2017 have been considered and the screening opinion updated accordingly.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The screening process undertaken by the National Park Authority concludes that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) are required for the Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan. This 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. It is also consistent with the requirements placed on other statutory development plans in preparation by the local planning authorities for the area which are going through the SEA and HRA process.
- 5.2 The Authority's conclusion is based on the fact that the Lymington & Pennington Neighbourhood Plan will, once adopted, be a statutory planning document that will set the framework for future development of a potentially significant scale in an area with a range of environmental designations. The Neighbourhood Plan is likely to allocate sites for development and include further policies that support development. The conclusions of this scoping report have been endorsed by the three statutory consultees in their responses received in February and March 2017.
- 5.3 Table 2 of this report sets out an assessment as to whether the emerging Lymington & Pennington 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; its likely scope; 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. It is therefore consistent to conclude that a separate, statutory plan being prepared to provide a framework for future development proposals is required to go through the same process. The scoping work has identified the following environmental effects as key:
- 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 requires consideration.
 - Recreational pressures arising from new development on international nature conservation sites including the New Forest SAC & SPA and the Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA, and Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar sites
 - Changes in water quality.
 - Potential impacts on built heritage assets, both directly and indirectly (through impacts on their settings).