

Your ref: |
Our ref: DCM/6.12/Ticehurst
Please ask David Marlow
for: 01424 787635
Direct dial no: 21 July 2017
Date:



Mrs S Carmichael
c/o Ticehurst Parish Council
By email |

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director of Business
Operations

Town Hall
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex TN39 3JX

Dear Sheena,

SEA Screening Opinion for the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan (TNP)

I am writing further to your request for an SEA Screening Opinion, received on 13 April 2017, together with extensive supporting information provided.

Further to the provisional advice contained in my letter of 13 June, I have now received the responses of the consultation bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency), as required by regulations.

Regard has been given to the advice of the statutory environmental bodies and especially those of Natural England, which advises that if allocations are being made that have not previously been assessed as part of the Council's Local Plan, then an SEA is required given the High Weald AONB designation of the whole of the area. Also, Historic England has said that the plan has the potential to have significant environmental effects within its area of interest and recommend that the NP is subject to an SEA. The Environment Agency has only drawn attention to a guidance document on consultations, but has indicated that it wishes to be consulted at the next stage.

Also, I note that:

1. The TNP will allocate sites and form part of the 'development plan' and thereby exert a direct and substantial influence over development proposals coming forward in the period.
2. As regards the characteristics of the area covered by the TNP (as set out in Schedule 1(2) of the regulations), I note particularly that:
 - a) the area is wholly within the High Weald AONB, which enjoys the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty;
 - b) several of the sites identified on the plans provided are affected by or adjacent to Ancient Woodland, certain BAP habitats, different key components of the AONB, Listed Buildings and also, in the case of Ticehurst, the Conservation Area and a historic park and garden, and in the case of Stonegate, a groundwater source protection zone.



Therefore, conscious of the government's planning practice guidance, which states that a Neighbourhood Plan may require an SEA where a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development, or the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan, then **I am advising, on behalf of the District Council, that an SEA will be required.**

I have drawn your attention to the 'Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report' produced by the District Council that is considered applicable to the SEA process of Neighbourhood Plans produced within the District. It can be found on our web-site here:

<http://www.rother.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5006>

You are advised that, in relation to the SEA process for the TNP, it is considered that the following objectives from the RDC Sustainability Appraisal Framework are applicable for the TNP to be screened in for SEA purposes:

- 7: Improve accessibility to services and facilities for all ages across the District
- 9: Improve efficiency in land use and encourage the prudent use of natural resources
- 10: Reduce road congestion and pollution levels and ensure air quality continues to improve by increasing travel choice and reducing car usage
- 11: Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases
- 12: Minimise the risk of flooding and resulting detriment to people and property
- 13: Maintain, improve and manage water resources in a sustainable way
- 14: Conserve and enhance bio-diversity and geo-diversity
- 15: Protect and enhance the high quality natural and built environment

You subsequently advised of your proposed SEA objectives and am pleased to see that all these are covered. While some are amalgamations of objectives, I see no fundamental issue with this. I note that you are also proposing to include two further objectives, akin to RDC objectives 1/2 as well as objective 16. Again, I see no issue with covering these, although you will appreciate that the SEA should consider these through an "environmental prism".

The scope of information to be included in the Environmental Report should address the identified SEA objectives. The level of detail should reflect the geographical extent of the NP as far as practicable, drawing on the Council's own Scoping Report referred to above and baseline information already provided and any available from other sources to meet regulatory requirements. Also, you may find the decision-aiding questions in the RDC Scoping Report helpful to the SEA process.

I will separately advise of the contacts at the consultation bodies to whom the Draft SEA (alongside the Pre-Submission TNP), should be sent when consulting under regulation 14.

Yours sincerely,



David Marlow
Planning Policy Manager

