



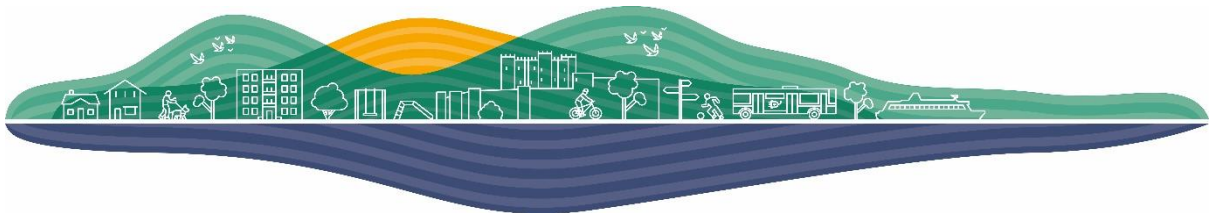
Dover District **Local Plan**

Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan (2025 to 2040)

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report
And
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report and Determination**

Prepared by Dover District Council on behalf of
Ringwould with Kingsdown Parish Council

Issued to Ringwould with Kingsdown Parish Council on 15th December 2025



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1 Introduction and Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a screening of the Regulation 14 Draft Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Development Plan (2025 to 2040) against the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). The principles of SEA and HRA are introduced in the following paragraphs, while the legislative context underpinning each is summarised ahead of the relevant assessments in Sections 3 and 4 of the report.

What is an SEA?

- 1.2 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under European legislation¹ for all plans which may have a significant effect on the environment. This particularly relates to plans which allocate development sites, including Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. An SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of a draft Plan, and reasonable alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative environmental effects and maximising the positives.
- 1.3 The purpose of SEA is to provide a high level of protection of the environment and to integrate environmental issues into the preparation and adoption of plans with a view to promoting sustainable development.
- 1.4 Not every plan needs an SEA. To determine whether the neighbourhood plan requires an SEA it is necessary to screen the objectives and proposals of the plan to determine whether it is likely to result in significant environmental effects. This can either be the local authority or the qualifying body (i.e. parish/town council or neighbourhood forum). As part of this screening process, it is necessary to consult the SEA consultation bodies (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) to get their opinion on whether or not the plan is likely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore whether an SEA is required.
- 1.5 One of the basic conditions (condition 'f') for a neighbourhood plan is that it does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations. To meet this condition with regard to strategic environmental assessment (SEA), a neighbourhood planning group needs to have either a statement of reasons as to why SEA is not required, or, where an SEA is deemed necessary, an environmental report (and non-technical summary) which documents the findings of the SEA.

¹ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633), as amended by The Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232). It should be noted that the purpose of the amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the European Union. No substantive changes are made to the way the SEA regime operates.

- 1.6 A neighbourhood plan should be screened as soon as there is sufficient information available to consider whether the proposed content of the plan or its likely intent (e.g. will it allocate development sites or not) are likely to lead to significant effects.
- 1.7 There are two potential outcomes to this screening: either the plan is not likely to result in any significant environmental effects and an SEA is not required, or the plan is deemed to be likely to result in significant environmental effects and that SEA (scoping report and full report) is required.

What is an HRA?

- 1.8 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a process which looks at the potential impact of proposals within a plan on internationally designated wildlife sites. For the purpose of the HRA, internationally designated wildlife sites are Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar wetland sites, which together are also known as 'Natura 2000' sites.
- 1.9 This initial screening stage of the HRA process involves consideration of the reasons for designation and the conservation objectives of each internationally designated wildlife site within a 'reasonable' distance of the particular Neighbourhood Plan Area and the potential impact of the proposals within the draft neighbourhood plan on these.

Relevant Dover District Assessments

- 1.10 The adopted Dover District Local Plan to 2040 is supported by the [Final SA Adoption Statement](#), published in September 2024. It includes links to different iterations of the sustainability appraisal and includes the Sustainability Appraisal Framework.
- 1.11 The [HRA Final \(2024\)](#) is a composite version of all updates that have taken place to the HRA since the consultation on the Regulation 19 September 2022 HRA and incorporates consideration of the Main Modifications to the Local Plan consulted on during April and May 2024. The relevant European sites within or in close proximity to Dover District are set out in Appendix B, while the full screening matrix is presented in Appendix C.

Consultation and Conclusion

- 1.12 This report details the screening process undertaken for the Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan against the requirements for an SEA and HRA to be produced to accompany the pre-submission (Regulation 14) version of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.13 A copy of the Draft Screening Report was sent on the 4th November 2025 to the three statutory consultees, the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, to obtain their views on its content. Full copies of their responses are included in Appendix 2 and summarised below:

Natural England: 'It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely'.
- Significant effects on Habitats sites, either alone or in combination, are unlikely

Historic England: 'It is noted that the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development.

Given the unlikely significant effects upon the historic environment/heritage assets, Historic England concurs with the Local Authority and hence considers that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be required'.

They have provided detailed general advice for the neighbourhood plan group to review in relation to the preparation of the neighbourhood plan, including a recommendation to consult with relevant conservation officers.

Environment Agency: 'Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to deliver multi-functional benefits through linking development with enhancements to the environment. This document sets out the key environmental issues within our remit which should be considered'. They have provided detailed guidance and advice to the Neighbourhood Planning group.

- 1.14 All respondents make clear that their advice is based on the information available at the time of this consultation and does not remove the requirement for further consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan or remove their right for further comment/objection on the Neighbourhood Plan / SEA process. They should be reconsulted on any revised SEA Screening if the plan is amended, and any subsequent SEA Scoping if progressed to that stage.

Conclusion

- 1.15 The draft Ringwould with Kingsdown NDP does not allocate sites for development and contains policies which would require any development coming forward to protect and enhance the environment. The assessment finds that no significant negative effects will occur as a result of the Regulation 14 Draft Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore concluded that a full SEA is **not required** at this time.
- 1.16 The Ringwould with Kingsdown NDP does not allocate any additional sites for development or include and proposals that would be likely to adversely affect the integrity of the internationally designated sites, alone or in combination with other projects and plans. It is therefore considered that a full HRA/AA of the Ringwould with Kingsdown NDP is **not required**.
- 1.17 Once the Regulation 15 Neighbourhood Plan is published, if it is changed in a significant manner, or any currently unidentified consequences or policy conflicts arise, a new SEA screening process may need to be undertaken to re-assess the conclusions on whether a full SEA/HRA will be required.

2 Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Development Plan (2025 to 2040)

Context

- 2.1 Ringwould with Kingsdown is a rural parish situated around 4 miles north-east of Dover within the Dover District. The parish comprises the villages of Ringwould and Kingsdown and had a population of 1,942 and 906 households at the time of the last Census in 2021.
- 2.2 Ringwould with Kingsdown's household composition is primarily single-family households while the most common household size comprises two residents. Most residential properties in the parish (82%) are owned. In 2021 the Parish age profile was 12% up to the age of 16, 48% aged between 16 and 64 with 40% aged 64 and over.

The Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.3 The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) area for Ringwould with Kingsdown was designated in November 2023 and covers the entire area of the parish.
- 2.4 The Ringwould with Kingsdown NP (RKNP) project is being led by a steering group set up by Ringwould with Kingsdown Parish Council (RKPC) as the qualifying body and comprises local councillors and volunteers from the community.
- 2.5 Through consultation with the community and others the Steering Group has established a vision and objectives for Ringwould with Kingsdown parish in 2040.
- 2.6 Once adopted, the RKNP planning policies would form part of the development plan for the district, establishing a framework of planning policy upon which development within the parish during the Plan period will be judged.
- 2.7 The vision for Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan is provided below:

Ringwould and Kingsdown villages in 2040 will give a Parish that combines the best aspects of Kentish rural and coastal village life with attractive traffic calmed roads and safe cycling and walking routes connecting the two communities. The A258 will have become a safe space. There will be clear views down to the unpolluted sea and the sandy beaches, where the beautiful natural flora and wildlife are celebrated and protected. It will have retained its dark skies, have unobtrusive renewable energy and managed development to meet the needs of the local population.

- 2.8 Underpinning this vision are six objective themes as set out below:

Objective Theme	Objectives
1. Spatial strategy and Housing	• To support the delivery of a mix of housing which meets the needs of the Parish within the identified environmental constraints. • To increase the supply of smaller and affordable homes. • To make the best and effective use of brownfield sites. • To restrict second home ownership locally, which erodes a flourishing community.
2. Character, heritage and design	• To preserve and enhance the heritage of the area. • To ensure development is well designed and reflects the heritage and distinctive character of the different areas of the Parish.
3. Natural Environment	• To protect and enhance the natural beauty of the Kent Downs landscape and the setting of <u>Ringwould</u> and Kingsdown. • To protect valued Local Green Spaces. • To maintain the distinctive locally valued views and visual connectivity of the villages with the surrounding countryside.
4. Local Economy	• To support activities that will add to the local economy and village centres. • To support sustainable tourism into the Parish.
5. Leisure and Wellbeing	• To ensure that sufficient community and leisure facilities are maintained to serve the Parish including new provision in association with new development. • To protect and enhance open spaces used for recreational purposes.
6. Getting Around	• To protect the extensive network of public rights of way serving the Parish and to enhance this for a range of users. • To ensure that new development is well connected to village facilities by a range of sustainable transport modes, including walking (and wheeling) and cycling and, where appropriate, makes suitable provision towards new sustainable transport infrastructure. • To ensure sufficient infrastructure is provided in a timely manner, appropriate to the scale of new development.

- 2.9 The draft RKNP sets out a framework of policies upon which (together with the Dover District Local Plan 2040, the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 (2025), and Kent Mineral Sites Plan 2020 development proposals within the parish will be judged, and these are summarised in the table below:

Table 1: Ringwould with Kingsdown NP Draft Policies and Summary of Policy Aims

Policy Reference and Title	Summary of Policy Aims
Spatial Strategy and Housing	
RKN1: Restricting Coalescence between settlements	Seeks to retain the distinctive character of the individual settlements by restricting the ability for settlements to coalesce.
RKNP2: Meeting Local Housing Needs	This policy seeks to influence housing proposals so that they meet the specific housing needs of the Parish in terms of size, tenure, affordability, future needs and the needs of people at different stages of their lives.
RKNP3: Principal Residence Policy	This policy seeks to ensure that any new open market housing coming forward in the Parish (apart from allocated sites) would only be occupied by a household living in the property as their main home.
Character, Heritage and Design	
RKNP4: Reflecting the character of the Parish through high quality design	To ensure that all new development, whether it is for an extension to an existing building; a new house, or a number of houses, is of the highest standard of design, reflecting local character and promoting local distinctiveness. It ensures that the R&K Design Guidance and Codes are used to inform future development proposals.
RKNP5: Energy efficiency and design	This policy seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, materials and energy use.
RKNP6: Renewable and community scale energy	This policy sets out the types of renewable energy projects that would fit well with the character of the area and would be supported. It also sets out the criteria to be considered as part of any renewable energy schemes in the neighbourhood area.
RKNP7: Gound Water Source Protection Zones	This policy sets out the approach for considering development proposals in GWPZ's to avoid contamination and/or any risk to drinking water quality.

Policy Reference and Title	Summary of Policy Aims
RKNP8: Heritage Assets	This policy seeks to recognise the major role that the historic environment (including the character of rural streets and lanes) has in shaping the development and identity of the Parish, and to protect and conserve the heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
Environment and Green Space	
RKNP9: Dark Skies	This policy seeks to ensure that the siting and design of development protects the night sky from light pollution.
RKNP10: Supporting the natural environment and biodiversity	This policy seeks to ensure that the multiple benefits of the Parish's green and blue spaces – including their importance in combating pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity and in off-setting the effects of air pollution – are recognised and enhanced. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure. This will serve to support the requirement to conserve and, where possible, provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy whilst accommodating sustainable development. The policy also seeks to preserve or enhance landscape character and provides guidance on open space incorporated in development proposals.
RKNP11: Local Green Space	Seeks designates 23 sites as Local Green Space to acknowledge their value to the community and protect them from inappropriate development.
RKNP12: Important public views	Identifies locally significant views and seeks to safeguard these from inappropriate development.
Leisure and Wellbeing	
RKNP13: Important community facilities	This policy seeks to resist the loss of key services and facilities and sets out where additional facilities, or expansions/upgrade, would be supported.
Getting Around	
RKNP14: Sustainable travel	Seeks to encourage more sustainable modes of transport by supporting active travel proposals and identifies PRow enhancements, funded through developer contributions or other project funding. It refers to connectivity of footpaths / bridleways and the need for works to footpaths and traffic calming measures to enhance rural character. It supports bicycle parking facilities.

Policy Reference and Title	Summary of Policy Aims
RKNP15: Public parking provision	The policy seeks to ensure that adequate public parking is provided serving the villages to ensure that walking, cycling and equestrian activities are not restricted by unsuitable parking. It seeks to retain existing, publicly available off-street car parking and supports additional public parking subject to impact on Conservation areas, designated sites and the National Landscape and supports bicycle parking facilities, and future-proofed electric vehicle charging points.

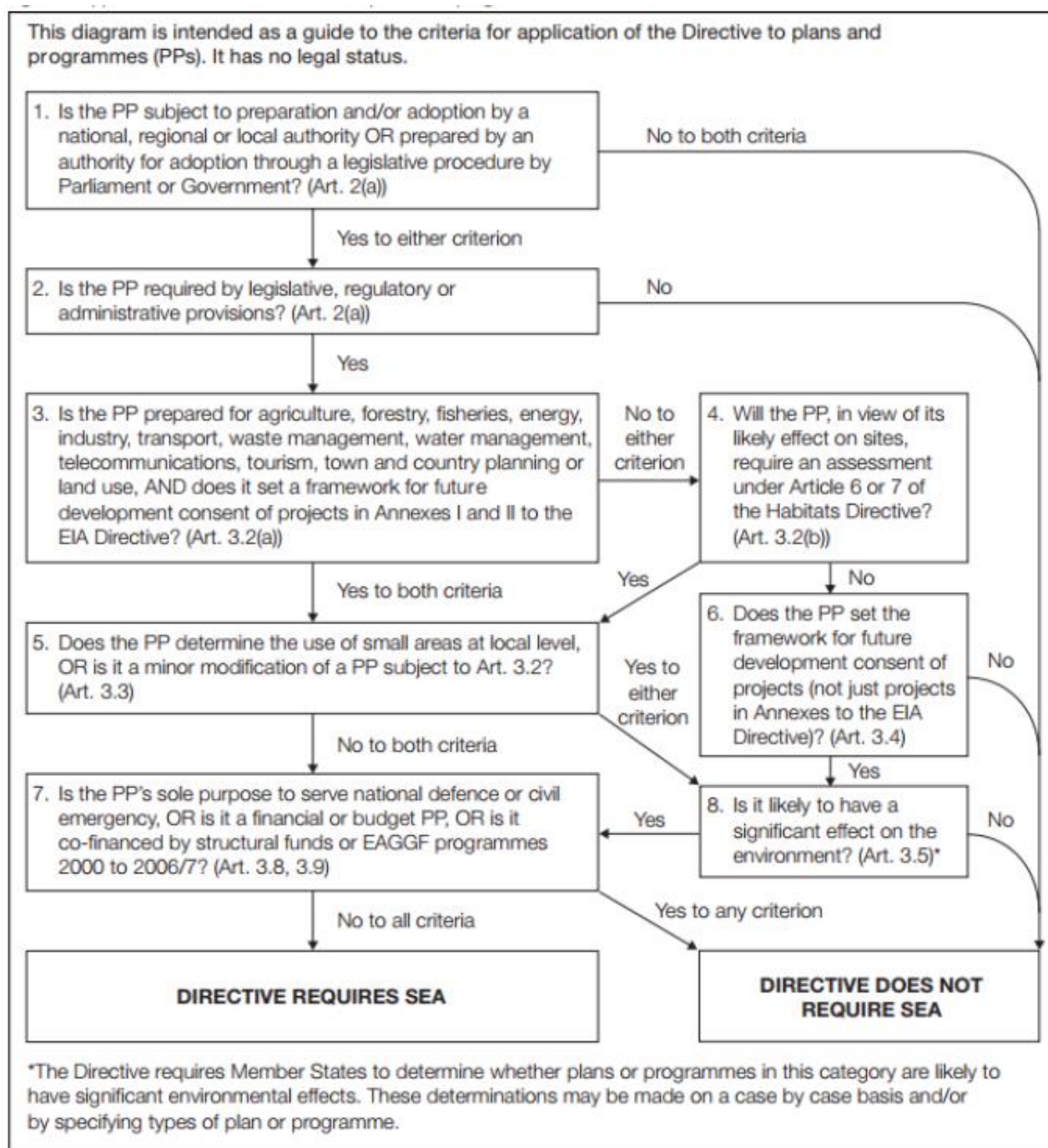
2.10 The following chapters carry out the SEA Screening Assessment and HRA Screening and Determination for the draft Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Development Plan (2025 to 2040).

3 SEA Screening Assessment

- 3.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive), transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations². Detailed Guidance regarding these regulations can be found in the Government publication “A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive” (ODPM 2005).
- 3.2 In October 2023 the Levelling up and Regeneration Act received royal assent, setting out detailed reforms to the planning system. Amongst other things, the Act allows for the replacement of the current SEA regime with a new requirement for an Environmental Outcomes Report. The specific requirements will be set out in forthcoming regulations, along with information about transition arrangements; however, at present the requirement for SEA remains as set out in existing legislation.
- 3.3 To establish if a plan needs to be accompanied by a full SEA, a “screening” assessment is required against a series of criteria set out in the SEA Directive. A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive sets out in a diagrammatic form the process for screening the Plan against a series of criteria.

² The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/1633), as amended by The Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1232). It should be noted that the purpose of the amendments to the SEA Regulations is to ensure that the law functions correctly after the UK has left the European Union. No substantive changes are made to the way the SEA regime operates

Figure 1 - Application of the SEA Directive to Plans and Programmes



Screening Report for Ringwoud with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan (2025 to 2040)

Part 1 - Utilising the step-by-step guide in relation to Ringwoud with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Development Plan

Table 1 - Utilising the step-by-step guide in relation to Ringwoud with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Development Plan

Stage	Y/N	Justification
1. Is the PP (Plan or Programme) 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))	Y	NPs are prepared by parish councils under the provision of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Localism act 2011. Once the plan is prepared it will be subject to Examination and Referendum, if successful it will be adopted by Dover District Council as the Local Planning Authority as part of the Development Plan.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art 2. (a))	Y	Whilst the provision of a NP is optional, it will form part of the Development Plan for the District. It is therefore important that the screening process considers whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects and whether SEA is required under the Directive.
3. Is the PP 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 to the EIA Directive (Art. 3.2 (a))	Y	The NP is being prepared for town and country planning and land use, and will therefore set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annex II of the EIA Directive including Energy and Infrastructure developments
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2(b))	N/A	See HRA Screening Assessment in Section 4
5. Does the PP 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)	Y	The NP does not allocate land for a specific purpose but does show preference for the type and form of development at the local level. Local Green Space designations are proposed and this will restrict development.
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art. 3.4)	Y	The NP (along with the remainder of the Development Plan) will be used to determine planning applications.
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve 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)	N/A	
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art 3.5)		See assessment carried out in Table 3

- 3.4 At this stage of Neighbourhood Plan preparation, the draft vision and objectives and policy themes of the neighbourhood plan as outlined in Section 2 of this report have been used to undertake this screening assessment.
- 3.5 If the information used to undertake this screening report is changed in a significant manner as the Neighbourhood Plan is redrafted, such as quantum or locations of development, then an additional screening exercise will be required.
- 3.6 This part of the report is to deal specifically with Question 8 of the SEA Directive guidance (Table 1 above). The criteria for this assessment is taken from Article 3.5 of the SEA Directive:

Part 2 – Assessment of likelihood of significant environmental effect for Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan (2025 to 2040) against Article 3.5 criteria

Table 2 - Assessment of likelihood of significant environmental effect for the Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan against Article 3.5 criteria

SEA Requirement	Assessment
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:	
1. 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;	Once made, the Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan will form the framework for decision-making for development proposals in the area. The plan does not make any development allocations. The Plan does propose Local Green Space (site) designations, which will restrict development in particular identified locations. The plan must be in general conformity with the Adopted Dover District Local Plan (2024)
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the adopted Dover District Local Plan to 2040 and have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for the Parish and will be used in conjunction with the Local Plan to determine planning applications. If the NP is not delivered, the District's existing Local Plan is not affected. The Local Plan was subject to SEA. The influence of the FNP on other plans and/or programmes is limited.
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	One of the Basic Conditions which the Neighbourhood Plan must meet is to contribute to sustainable development. The plan recognises paragraph 30 of the NPPF which refers to the neighbourhood plan helping to deliver sustainable development. Policies in the NP seek to conserve and enhance the natural environment, including the historic environment,

	protecting water resources and responding to the changing climate.
Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;	There are no specific environmental problems relevant to this NP. While the NP does not allocate sites for development, it aims to protect and enhance the environment and biodiversity via Policy RKNP10, as well as designating Local Green Spaces under RKNP11, and important public views under RKNP12. These policies help to ensure the NP has a positive effect on the environment. The changing climate is recognised and Policy RKNP5 (Energy Efficiency and Design) will help to mitigate climate change. In addition, Policy RKNP6 set out the types of renewable energy projects that would be supported.
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).	The NDP will not affect implementation of European Community environmental legislation (or those now transcribed in UK law), which have been taken into account during the preparation of the adopted Dover District Local Plan with which the NP must be in conformity. The plan includes a detailed policy on Ground Water Source Protection Zones.
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for housing or other forms of development. An element of change to the environment is likely to occur because the plan does not seek to prevent change. The impact of change will depend upon individual proposals and will be assessed at the planning application stage. The NP does (both as a whole and respect to specific policies) seek to protect and enhance the environment. An element of environmental change is likely to occur, as the Plan does not seek to prevent change. The NP will therefore reduce the potential for likely significant effects.
The cumulative nature of the effects;	The Local Plan does not identify a minimum housing requirement for the Parish. Local Plan Policy SP3 identifies Kingsdown as a 'Local Centre' in the Settlement Hierarchy Ringwould as a 'Smaller Village/Hamlet'. The Dover District Local Plan allocates a site with an indicative capacity of 50 dwellings in Kingsdown (SAP34) and 10 dwellings in Ringwould (SAP53). Policy SP4 states that windfall residential development of an appropriate scale will be permitted within or adjoining the settlement boundary for Kingsdown and within the settlement boundary for Ringwould. The adopted Dover District Local Plan has been subject to full Sustainability Appraisal, which addresses cumulative matters in more detail. The NP does not propose any development which is likely to result in any cumulative effects. An element of environmental change is likely to occur, as the Plan does not seek to prevent change. The NP proposes policies which seek to further protect and enhance the environment and promote renewable energy generation and energy efficiency.

The transboundary nature of the effects;

The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);

The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);

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

Effects on adjoining parishes or districts will be localised and not significant. Transboundary effects under the SEA Regulations refer to transboundary effects on other EU Member States; and are not relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan.

No significant risks have been identified to human health or the environment. The policies within the Plan seek to protect and enhance the environment, encourage sustainable travel and promote wellbeing and health.

The geographic area and population of the area affected by the plan covers are relatively small. The area of the parish is 638 ha with a population of 1,942 and 906 households (2021 census).

i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage. There are internationally, nationally and locally protected sites within the NP area:

- The Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs Special Area of Conservation (SAC) extends south from the junction of Oldstairs Road and Undercliffe Road.
- The coastal area from South Road to beyond the southern boundary forms part of the Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- All of the coastline in the NDP area is within the nationally designated Dover to Deal Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ).
- There are 3 Local Wildlife Sites in the NDP area at The Lynch and Oxney Court Woods, Ringwould, Walmer and Kingsdown Golf Course and Kingsdown and Walmer Beach.
- National Priority Habitat Inventory sites comprise deciduous woodland, lowland calcareous grassland, coastal vegetated shingle, maritime cliff and slope and no main habitat but additional habitats present.
- Locally-identified Priority Habitats (Kent Habitat Survey 2012) towards the coast comprise lowland and rank calcareous grassland, intertidal chalk, perennial vegetation of stony banks. There are also small areas of other lowland meadows and a traditional orchard further inland.

See Map A and B at Appendix 1 for wildlife designations.

The majority of the parish is within Archaeological Notification Areas which give advice on the potential for archaeology and responding consultation requirements. There is 1 scheduled monument south of Hill Farm. The centres of Ringwould and Kingsdown are Conservation Areas and include listed buildings. See Map B at appendix 1.

Land along the coast (broadly east of Wellington Parade, Undercliffe Road and The Leas, but also including properties in South Road and adjacent parts of North Road and Cliffe Road) is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. There are also several areas at risk of Surface Water flooding within the Kingsdown and Ringwould built-up areas, and in the countryside in-between. The land in and around Ringwould is within Groundwater Protection Zone 2 with areas north

and south of Ringwould Road and to the south-west within Groundwater Protection Zone 1. See Map C at Appendix 1.

The parish contains Grade 2 (Very Good) and Grade 3 (Good to Moderate) agricultural land.

The draft NDP contains policies to protect and enhance the areas of the natural and historic environment identified above, giving the opportunity to shape proposals in ways which improve, or at worst avoid harm to, those assets identified. The draft NP also designates 22 areas as Local Green Spaces which further safeguards areas of local cultural/beauty/landscape/recreational/biodiversity value.

ii) The draft NP is not expected to result in an exceeding of environmental quality standards or limit values.

iii) The draft NP does not allocate sites for development, rather it sets a local framework upon which future development will be judged alongside the adopted Dover District Local Plan. The draft NP and the adopted DDLP both seek to make efficient use of land and so no significant environmental effects are anticipated resulting from intensive land-use.

The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

The southern part of the parish, between the A258 Dover Road in Ringwould to the coast and south of Ringwould Road and Kingsdown, forms part of the designated Kent Downs National Landscape. Land to the east of Oldstairs Road has also been 'defined' as part of the South Foreland Heritage Coast. See Map B in Appendix 1.

At Policy RKNP12, the draft NP identifies locally-important public views which should be taken into account in development proposals, which acts as a safeguard against significant localised landscape impacts. The Plan refers to the Kent Downs Management Plan which is Adopted by the Council and is also used in the determination of planning applications.

Part 2 SEA Overall Conclusion

The policies contained within the draft NP alongside those within the adopted Dover District Local Plan to 2040 will ensure that any development coming forward as windfall development is **unlikely** to have significant environmental effects

SEA Screening Conclusion

- 3.7 The draft NP does not allocate sites for development and contains policies which would require any development coming forward to protect and enhance the environment. The assessment finds that no significant effects will occur as a result of the Regulation 14 Draft Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore concluded that a full SEA is **not required** at this time.

- 3.8 Once the Regulation 15 Neighbourhood Plan is published, if it is changed in a significant manner, or any currently unidentified consequences or policy conflicts arise, a new SEA screening process may need to be undertaken to re-assess the conclusions on whether a full SEA will be required.

4 HRA Screening Report and Determination

- 4.1 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) refers to the appropriate assessment required for any plan or project to assess the potential implications for European wildlife sites. The HRA therefore looks at whether the implementation of the plan or project would harm the habitats or species for which European wildlife sites are designated. These include:
- Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
- 4.2 In addition to SPAs and SACs, Ramsar sites are designated under the Ramsar Convention (Iran 1971 as amended by the Paris Protocol 1992). Although they are not covered by the Habitats Regulations, as a matter of national planning policy, Ramsar sites are treated in the same way as European wildlife sites. These European wildlife sites are often grouped and known as Natura 2000 sites.
- 4.3 The first stage of the HRA process is a “screening” exercise where the details of nearby internationally designated sites are assessed to see if there is the potential for the implementation of the Plan to have an impact on the site.
- 4.4 The purpose of the Screening stage is to:
- Identify all aspects of the plan that would have no effect on a European site. These can be eliminated from further consideration in respect of this and other plans
 - Identify all aspects of the plan that would not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site (i.e. would have some effect because of links/connectivity but the effect is not significant), either alone or in combination with other aspects of the same plan or other plans or projects. These do not require ‘Appropriate Assessment’.
 - Identify those aspects of the plan where it is not possible to rule out the risk of significant effects on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This provides a clear scope for the parts of the plan that will require Appropriate Assessment.
- 4.5 The following assessment will screen the potential impact of the proposals for the Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan on these sites within 20km of the Neighbourhood Area Boundary.
- 4.6 The following Natura 2000 sites are located within 20km of the Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Area boundary (See Map A – Appendix 1).

Table 4 - International Designated Sites (within 20km) of Ringwould with Kingsdown NDP boundary

European Sites	Closest Distance/Location from Neighbourhood Plan Area	
Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs SAC	Partly within the NP Area	1
Lydden and Temple Ewell Downs SAC	6.97km west	2
Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay RAMSAR	3.19km north-east	3
Sandwich Bay SAC	4.70km north-east	4
Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA	4.28km north-east	5
Thanet Coast SAC	14.49km north	6
Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC	15.28km south-west	7
Stodmarsh SAC	17.71km north-west	8
Stodmarsh Ramsar	17.88km north-west	9
Stodmarsh SPA	17.88km north-west	10
Parkgate Down SAC	18.43km west	11

Assessment of ‘Likely Significant Effects’ of Ringwould with Kingsdown NDP policies

- 4.7 As required under Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), an assessment has been undertaken of the ‘likely significant effects’ of the plan. The assessment has been prepared in order to identify which policies would be likely to have a significant effect on European sites (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects). The Screening assessment has been conducted without taking any proposed mitigation into account, in accordance with the ‘People over Wind’ judgement.

4.8 If the potential for policies to have likely significant effects is identified, consideration would then be given to the potential for the development proposed to result in significant effects associated with:

- Physical loss or damage to habitat;
- Non-physical disturbance (noise, vibration and light pollution);
- Non-toxic contamination;
- Air pollution;
- Recreational pressure; and
- Changes to hydrology, including water quantity and quality.

4.9 Relevant case law helps to interpret when effects should be considered as a likely significant effect, when carrying out HRA of a land use plan.

4.10 In the Waddenzee case, the European Court of Justice ruled on the interpretation of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (translated into Reg. 102 in the Habitats Regulations), including that:

An effect should be considered ‘likely’, “if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on the site” (paragraph 44). An effect should be considered ‘significant’, “if it undermines the conservation objectives” (paragraph 48). Where a plan or project has an effect on a site “but is not likely to undermine its conservation objectives, it cannot be considered likely to have a significant effect on the site concerned” (paragraph 47).

4.11 Further, a relevant opinion delivered to the Court of Justice of the European Union commented that:

“The requirement that an effect in question be ‘significant’ exists in order to lay down a de minimis threshold. Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on the site are thereby excluded. If all plans or projects capable of having any effect whatsoever on the site were to be caught by Article 6(3), activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill.”

4.12 This opinion (the ‘Sweetman’ case) therefore allows for the authorisation of plans and projects whose possible effects, alone or in combination, can be considered ‘trivial’ or de minimis; referring to such cases as those “that have no appreciable effect on the site”. In practice such effects could be screened out as having no likely significant effect – they would be ‘insignificant’.

4.13 The HRA Screening assessment therefore considers whether the draft Ringwould with Kingsdown NDP policies could have likely significant effects either alone or in combination.

Table 3 - Assessment of Ringwould with Kingsdown NP Likely Significant Effects on European Site

Policy Reference and Title	Likely Significant Effects on SPA/SAC/RAMSAR? Y/N	Justification
RKNP1: Restricting Coalescence between settlements	N	Seeks to retain the distinctive character of the individual settlements by restricting the ability for settlements to coalesce. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP2: Meeting Local Housing Needs	N	This policy seeks to influence housing proposals so that they meet the specific housing needs of the Parish in terms of size, tenure, affordability, future needs and the needs of people at different stages of their lives. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP3: Principal Residence Policy	N	This policy seeks to ensure that any new open market housing coming forward in the Parish (apart from allocated sites) would only be occupied by a household living in the property as their main home. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP4: Reflecting the character of the Parish through high quality design	N	To ensure that all new development, whether it is for an extension to an existing building; a new house, or a number of houses, is of the highest standard of design, reflecting local character and promoting local distinctiveness. It ensures that the R&K Design Guidance and Codes are used to inform future development proposals. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP5: Energy Efficiency and Design	N	This policy seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, materials and energy use. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP6: Renewable and community scale energy	N	This policy sets out the types of renewable energy projects that would fit well with the character of the area and would be supported. It also sets out the criteria to be considered as part of any renewable energy schemes in the neighbourhood area. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP7: Ground Water Source Protection Zones	N	This policy sets out the approach for considering development proposals in GWPZ's to avoid contamination and/or any risk to drinking water quality. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.

RKNP8: Heritage Assets	N	This policy seeks to recognise the major role that the historic environment (including the character of rural streets and lanes) has in shaping the development and identity of the Parish, and to protect and conserve the heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP9: Dark Skies	N	This policy seeks to ensure that the siting and design of development protects the night sky from light pollution. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP10: Supporting the natural environment and biodiversity	N	This policy seeks to ensure that the multiple benefits of the Parish's green and blue spaces – including their importance in combating pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity and in off-setting the effects of air pollution – are recognised and enhanced. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure. This will serve to support the requirement to conserve and, where possible, provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy whilst accommodating sustainable development. The policy also seeks to preserve or enhance landscape character and provides guidance on open space incorporated in development proposals. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP11: Local Green Space	N	Seeks designates 23 sites as Local Green Space to acknowledge their value to the community and protect them from inappropriate development. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP12: Important public views	N	Identifies locally significant views and seeks to safeguard these from inappropriate development. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP13: Important community facilities	N	This policy seeks to resist the loss of key services and facilities and sets out where additional facilities, or expansions/upgrade, would be supported. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.

RKNP14: Sustainable travel	N	Seeks to encourage more sustainable modes of transport by supporting active travel proposals and identifies PRow enhancements, funded through developer contributions or other project funding. It refers to connectivity of footpaths / bridleways and the need for works to footpaths and traffic calming measures to enhance rural character. It supports bicycle parking facilities. The policy does not directly lead to development, and no significant effects are likely as a result.
RKNP12: Public parking provision	N	The policy seeks to ensure that adequate public parking is provided serving the villages to ensure that walking, cycling and equestrian activities are not restricted by unsuitable parking. It seeks to retain existing, publicly available off-street car parking and supports additional public parking subject to impact on Conservation areas, designated sites and the National Landscape and supports bicycle parking facilities, and future-proofed electric vehicle charging points. The policy does not directly lead to development and no significant effects are likely as a result.

- 4.12 None of the draft Ringwould with Kingsdown NP policies are expected to have a likely significant effect on European-protected sites alone. Although there are protected sites which would be close enough to require further consideration at the Appropriate Assessment stage, the lack of site allocations in the Ringwould with Kingsdown NP avoids the need for such an assessment. As per Table 5, there are no likely significant effects on European sites from the Ringwould with Kingsdown NP policies alone.

Assessing the Potential for In-Combination Effects

- 4.13 Regulation 105 of the Habitats Regulations 2017 requires an Appropriate Assessment where “a land use plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site”. Therefore, where likely insignificant effects are identified for the plan alone, it is necessary to consider whether these may become significant effects in combination with other plans or projects.
- 4.14 The adopted Dover District Local Plan proposes two residential site allocations within the Ringwould with Kingsdown NDP boundary, under Policy SAP34 where ‘Land at Woodhill Farm Ringwould Road, Kingsdown’ is allocated with an indicative capacity of 50 dwellings and Policy SAP53 where ‘Land at Ringwould Alpines’ is allocated with an indicative capacity of 10 dwellings.
- 4.15 Additionally, several other neighbourhood plans are in preparation across the District as per the Council’s [Neighbourhood Planning webpage](#) and windfall development can result in in-combination effects too.

- 4.16 The Council's most recent land supply update (January 2025) shows no major sites with full or outline planning permission within the NDP area since the Adoption of the Dover District Local Plan 2040. There is 1 minor site with planning permission (25/00374). There are 5 further undetermined applications for 4 residential units (App No -25/00737), three residential units (App No 25/00925) and three applications for one residential unit (Applications Nos 23/01428, 25/00136 and 25/1021).
- 4.17 There are 2 major sites, and 1 minor site allocated for housing within or adjacent the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, with a combined indicative capacity of 65 dwellings. These sites were considered as part of the Habitats Relations Assessment of the Dover District Local Plan 2040.
- 4.18 There is currently a submitted planning application on two of the allocated sites (App no 25/00113 - Land at Woodhill Farm, Ringwould Road, Kingsdown, and App No. 24/00165 Land at Former Ringwould Apines). Of note, the Woodland Farm allocation has an indicative capacity of 50 dwellings, and the planning application is seeking planning permission for a larger number (70 dwellings). The application has not yet been determined, but information has been submitted to support a Habitats Regulations Assessment. The assessment identified the potential for the proposed scheme to have an adverse impact on the integrity of Dover to Kingsdown Cliffs SAC and Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA/SAC. The potential impacts are identified as air pollution and recreation pressure and planning permission will only be granted if the Council is content that any potential likely significant effects can be successfully avoided. Currently, the information provided to inform an HRA of the planning application seeks to demonstrate that potential likely significant effects can be successfully avoided.
- 4.19 Any windfall sites that come forward, including those above) would be assessed against the existing policy framework, including the Dover District Local Plan 2040. In terms of recreational impact on Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA, the agreed Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA Strategic Access Mitigation and Monitoring Strategy will apply to any development that takes place in the Zone of Influence (see Map 1). This ZOI covers the northern part of the neighbourhood area. The neighbourhood plan should refer to the Mitigation Strategy for context, recognising it may need to change, depending if the nature of the recreational pressures change over time.
- 4.20 However, given that the draft Ringwould with Kingsdown NP does not identify any further sites for housing development, or other uses involving new development, it is considered that the NDP results in no likely in-combination effects on European-protected sites over and above those already addressed as part of the Appropriate Assessment of the adopted Dover District Local Plan.

HRA Screening Conclusion

- 4.21 The Habitat Regulations Assessment of this neighbourhood plan concluded that there are no potential significant effects upon integrity of the internationally designated sites (SPA, SAC or Ramsar sites) alone or in combination with other projects and plans. Therefore, no further work as part of the compliance with the Habitat Regulations will

be required. The statutory consultees have indicated that they agree with this conclusion.

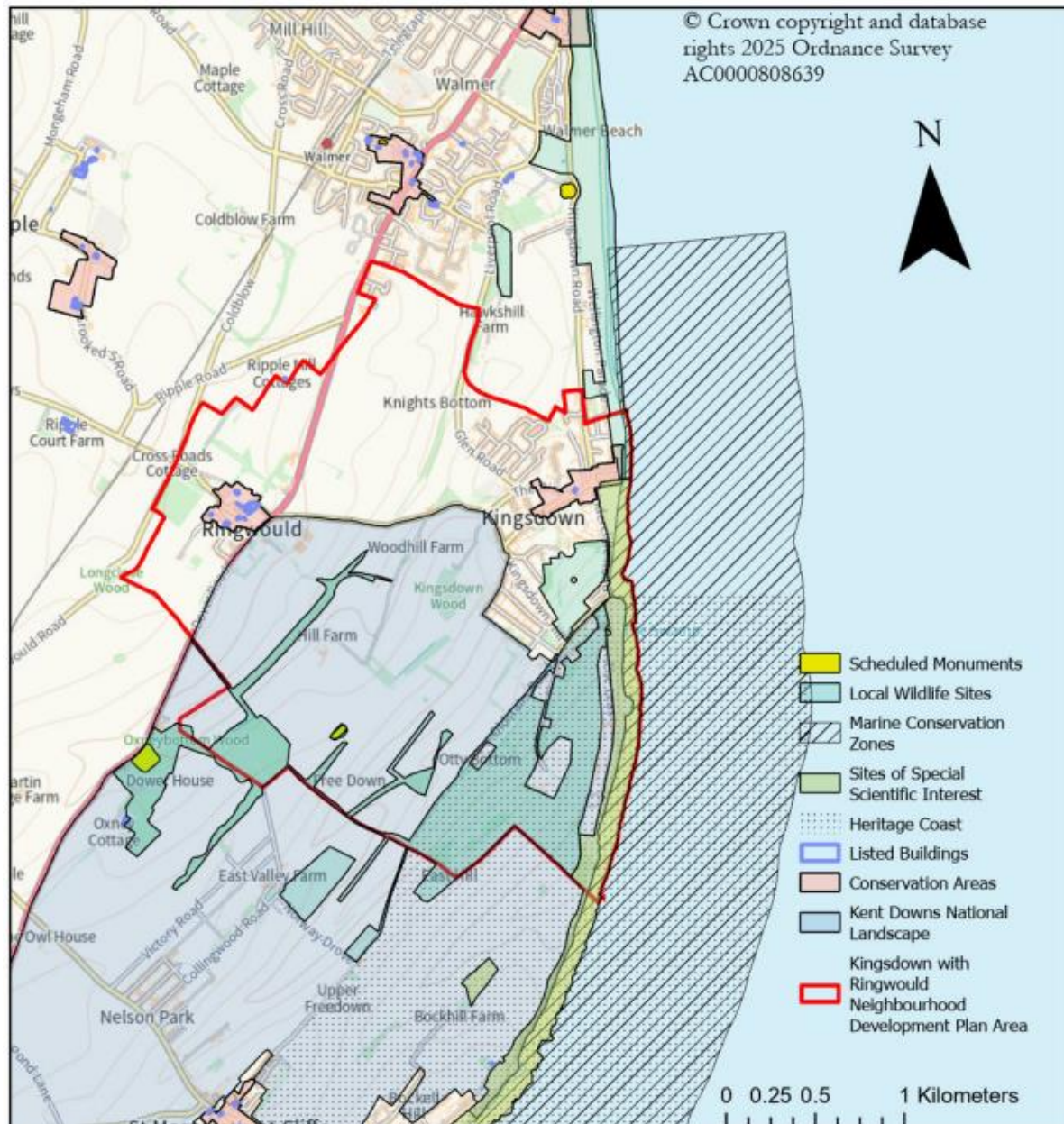
- 4.22 Once the Regulation 15 Neighbourhood Plan is published if it is changed in a significant manner, or any currently unidentified consequences or policy conflicts arise, a new HRA screening process may need to be undertaken to re-assess the conclusions on whether a full HRA/AA will be required.

Appendix 1: Maps

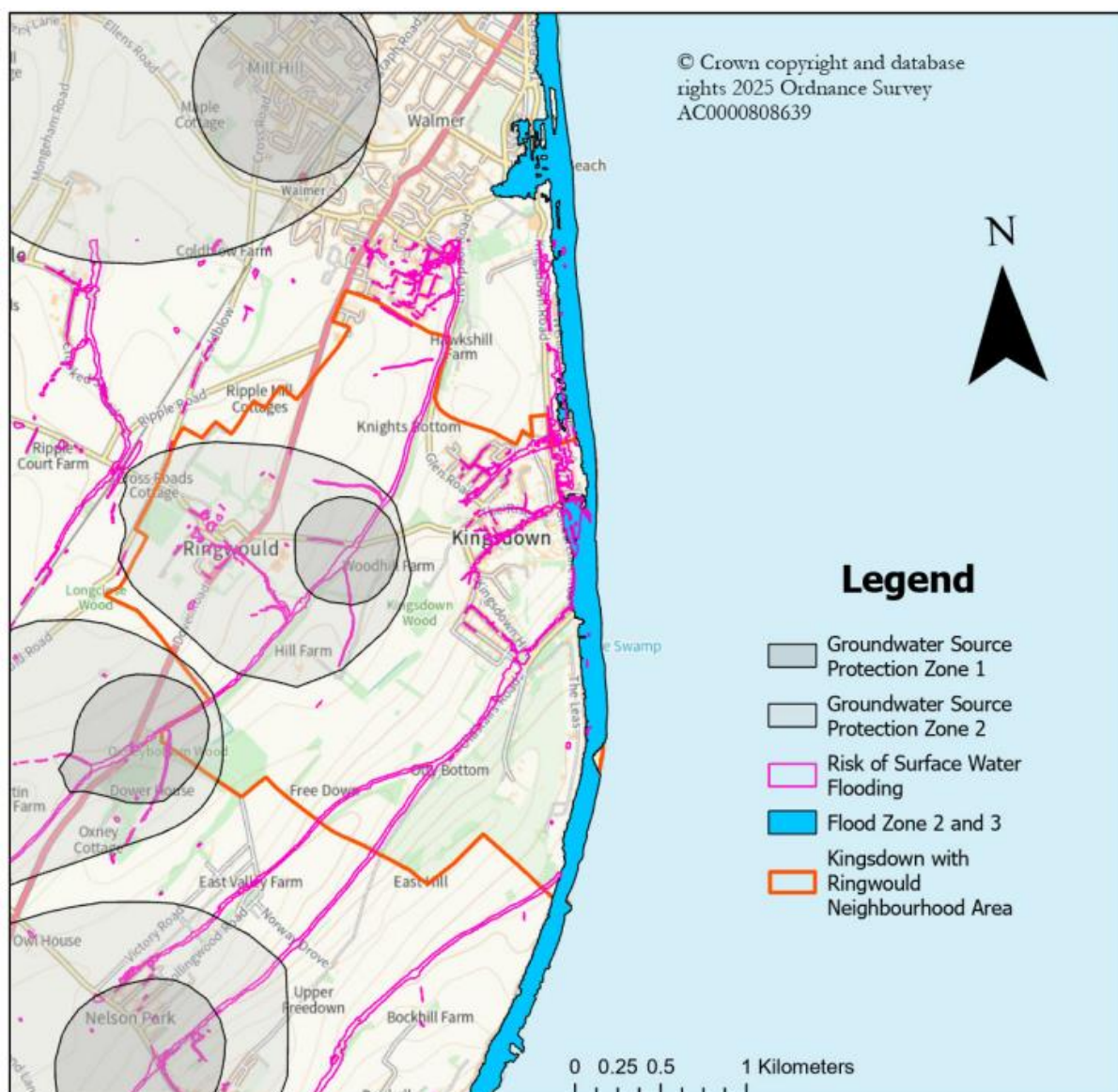
Map A: Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Development Plan Area and SPA, SAC, and Ramsar sites within 20km (labelled according to Table 4).



Map B: Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Development Plan Area and Nature Conservation (not SPA, SAC, or Ramsar), Heritage and Landscape designations.



Map C: Ringwold with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Development Plan Area and Groundwater Source protection Zones and areas identified at risk of flooding



Appendix 2 – Statutory Consultee Responses

Historic England



By email only to: planning.policy@dover.gov.uk

Our ref: PL00800358
Your ref: Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan SEA

Main: 020 7973 3700
e-seast@historicensland.org.uk
louise.dandy@historicensland.org.uk

Date: 15/12/2025

Dear Sir or Madam

Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan SEA Screening Opinion

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on this consultation. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. For the purposes of this consultation, Historic England will confine its advice to the question, "Is it (the Neighbourhood Plan) likely to have a significant effect on the historic environment?". Our comments are based on the information supplied.

It is noted that the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for development.

Given the unlikely significant effects upon the historic environment/heritage assets, Historic England concurs with the Local Authority and hence considers that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will not be required.

Historic England strongly advises that the conservation and archaeological staff of the relevant local authorities are closely involved throughout the preparation of the plan and its assessment. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the Historic Environment Record (HER), how the allocation, policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and



design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.

We should like to stress that this opinion is based on the information provided by you with your correspondence. To avoid any doubt, this does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on later stages of the NP process and, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise (either as a result of this consultation or in later versions of the plan) where we consider that these would have an adverse effect upon the environment.

Please do contact me, via email if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Louise

Louise Dandy
Historic Places Adviser

Natural England

Date: 09 December 2025
Our ref: 533215
Your ref: Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan

Mr Jillian Barr
Dover District Council

BY EMAIL ONLY
planningpolicy@dover.gov.uk



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

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr Barr

Ringwould with Kingsdown Neighbourhood Plan - SEA/HRA Screening Report Consultation

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 4 November 2025.

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 (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites¹, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- 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.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected

¹ Habitats sites are those referred to in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Annex 2 - glossary) as 'any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas

species, so is unable to advise whether this plan is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an SEA. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. The plan may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an SEA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the plan before determining whether a SEA is necessary.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Sally Wintle
Consultations Team

Environment Agency

RE: Ringwood with Kingsdown draft Neighbourhood Plan SEA/HRA Screening Joanne Jill dealing

KSLPlanning<KSLPLANNING@environment-agency.gov.uk>
To: PlanningPolicy
Cc: Jillian Barr

Reply Reply all Forward 13/11/2025 12:17

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You forwarded this message on Thu 13/11/2025 15:40

Neighbourhood Plan Advice ...
315 KB

[CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click link]

Hi Jillian,

Thank you for your email.

Please see our attached response.

Don't hesitate to contact us if you need any further information.

Kind regards,
Abbie Philpott

Planning Advisor – Kent and South London Sustainable Places
Environment Agency | Orchard House, Endeavour Park, Addington, West Mole

kslplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk
Working pattern: Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm
Pronouns: she/her ([why is this here?](#))



Kent, South London and East Sussex

Neighbourhood Plan Advice Note

Updated: February 2021

Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to deliver multi-functional benefits through linking development with enhancements to the environment. This document sets out the key environmental issues, within our remit, which should be considered.

Together with Natural England, English Heritage and Forestry Commission we have published joint advice on neighbourhood planning which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/Environment-Toolkit-20181220.pdf>

We also recommend your Plan takes account of relevant Local Planning Authority's policies, plans and strategies including Local Planning Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, flood risk strategies (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flood-risk-management-current-schemes-and-strategies>), and the South East River Basin Management Plan (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-east-river-basin-management-plan>) Thames River Basin Management Plan (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/289937/geth0910bswa-e-e.pdf) as appropriate.

The information below explains the key issues we would consider in reviewing your Plan. We aim to reduce flood risk, while protecting and enhancing the water environment.

Flood risk

Development must be safe and should not increase the risk of flooding.

Neighbourhood Plans should conform to national and local policies on flood risk:

If a Neighbourhood Plan is proposing sites for development please check whether there are any areas of Flood Zones 2 or 3 within the proposed site allocations.

You can view a site's flood zone on the Flood Map for Planning on our website: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>

If the proposed allocation is located within Flood Zone 2 or 3 you should consult the Flood Risk and Coastal Change pages of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG): <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change/>

Here you can determine whether the flood risk vulnerability of the proposed development and the flood zone are compatible. In accordance with national planning policy the Sequential Test should be undertaken to ensure development is directed to the areas of lowest flood risk. This should be informed by the Environment Agency's floodmap for planning and the Local Planning Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), if they have one. We recommend you contact the Local Planning Authority to discuss this requirement further.

We would have concerns if development is allocated in this high risk flood zone without the Sequential Test being undertaken.

It is important that your Plan also considers whether the flood risk issues associated with these sites can be safely managed to ensure development can come forward.

www.gov.uk/environment-agency

We can provide any flooding information which we have available – such as predicted flood levels and historical flood data. Please note that there may be a charge for this information. Please contact our Customers and Engagement Team at ksle@environment-agency.gov.uk for further details.

In addition to the above you should also check with the Local Planning Authority's Neighbourhood Planning team with regards to other sources of flooding (such as surface water, groundwater, sewers and historic flooding) as detailed in their Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), now has responsibility for local flood risk management and may hold flooding information that is not identified on our Flood Map.

Climate Change Allowances

The Local Authority's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should indicate the extent of flood zones with likely climate change.

On 19 February 2016, we published new guidance for planners and developers on how to use climate change allowances: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>.

Flood Defences

Areas of your Neighbourhood Plan area, or proposed sites, may be given protection by a flood defence/alleviation scheme. Where this is the case the Plan should acknowledge this and identify the level of protection provided (including any climate change allowance). It should be noted that flood defences are intended to protect existing properties and are not to facilitate new development in areas that would otherwise be impacted by flooding. Any assessment of development behind flood defences should consider the impacts of a breach or overtopping. Where it is determined that new development should be behind a flood defence financial contributions may be sought to maintain or improve the structure.

Thames Estuary 2100 (Tidal Defences)

In line with requirements set out in the Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100) plan, developments in this location will need to demonstrate how the flood defence could be raised in the future to meet the demands of climate change.

No activities on site should preclude access to the flood defence from maintenance or prevent the future raising of flood defences. In some cases we hold technical drawings of flood defence structures which may be of use. To request these you should contact our Customers and Engagement Team at ksle@environment-agency.gov.uk

Ecology

Proximity to watercourse/ Ecology

Main rivers can be viewed on the Environment Agency's map: <https://environment.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=17cd53dfc524433980cc333726a56386>

We normally require a buffer zone of 8 metres (fluvial) and 16 metres (tidal) between any new development and the top of the bank of the main river. The permanent retention of a continuous unobstructed area is an essential requirement for emergency access to the river for repairs to the bank and for future maintenance and/or improvement works. A buffer between new development and the river wall is also required to ensure no adverse loading which could impact the stability of the channel wall. This buffer zone will help provide more space for flood waters, provide improved habitat for local biodiversity and allows access for any maintenance requirements.

Where development is proposed next to the river we recommend that it includes a green buffer strip alongside the watercourse. Where such a buffer strip does not currently exist, we normally seek that it is established. This is a key way in which we carry out our legal duty to further and promote the ecological and landscape value of rivers and land associated with them. In urban areas, in particular, rivers have

customer service line
03708 506 506
www.gov.uk/environment-agency

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0345 988 1188

often been degraded by past development, and we expect that any new development should go some way to redress the balance.

The provision of green infrastructure, particularly along rivers, and the inclusion of sustainable drainage techniques can help reduce the risk of flooding. This can also provide recreational and wildlife benefits. Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in the Plan will be encouraged. In accordance with national policy, any development proposal should avoid significant harm to biodiversity and seek to protect and enhance it; delivering biodiversity net gain. We would not support development proposals if there was shown to be a likely detrimental impact on the water environment.

Water Management and Groundwater Protection

Local level actions and decision making can help secure improvements to the water environment. This is widely known as the catchment-based approach and has been adopted to deliver requirements under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). It seeks to:

- deliver positive and sustained outcomes for the water environment by promoting a better understanding of the environment at a local level; and
- encourage local collaboration and more transparent decision-making when both planning and delivering activities to improve the water environment.

Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity to deliver multi-functional benefits through linking development with enhancements to the water environment. Local WFD catchment data can be obtained from: <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/RiverBasinDistrict>

Overall deterioration in water quality and promoting improvement in the ecological status of any water body. Actions to achieve this are listed in the Thames River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and the South East River Basin Management Plan <https://www.gov.uk/search?q=River+Basin+Management+Plans>

Where appropriate, a WFD Assessment (<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/water-supply-wastewater-and-water-quality/water-supply-wastewater-and-water-quality-considerations-for-planning-applications/>) should assess any potential impacts on the watercourse and demonstrate that the required enhancements will be delivered. Any development that has the potential to cause deterioration in classification under WFD or that precludes the recommended actions from being delivered in the future is likely to be considered unacceptable to us.

Groundwater Quality

Development must not cause pollution to the water environment.

Aquifers and Source Protection Zones

Some of your local area, and specific potential site allocations, may be located upon or within aquifers and Source Protection Zones (link below). SPZ 1 is especially sensitive. You might consider these within your Plan and when allocating sites. The relevance of the designation and the potential implication upon development proposals should be seen with reference to our Groundwater Protection guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

To see if a proposed development is located within a Source Protection Zone, please use our online map: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/groundwater-source-protection-zones-spzs>

Land Contamination

You must consider land contamination when preparing your plan. Managing it during development is key to addressing past contamination and preventing further impacts during development.

You can establish if a site may be contaminated in several ways. Your Local Authority may hold a register of sites it knows to be contaminated. A list of potentially contaminated sites can be accessed on the following link:

<https://www.clair.co.uk/useful-government-legislation-and-guidance-by-country/76-key-documents/198-doe-industry-profiles>

We recommend you contact your Local Authority's Environmental Health team who may hold records on known/potential land contamination. Please note our primary concern is with regards to water quality. Your Local Authority's Environmental Health team will advise you on issues related to human health.

Further information can be accessed on the following links:

Guiding principles for the Land Contamination

<https://www.clair.co.uk/useful-government-legislation-and-guidance-by-country/192-guiding-principles-for-land-contamination-gplc>

Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination:

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140328160926/http://cdn.environment-agency.gov.uk/scho0804bibr-e-e.pdf>

Approach to Groundwater Protection:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692989/Environment-Agency-approach-to-groundwater-protection.pdf

Water supply and foul drainage

When allocating sites in your Plan, you will need to consider if the water supply and foul drainage infrastructure can accommodate the development. Your local water company can provide further information about water supply and sewerage capacity.

Surface water drainage

The inclusion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) should always be a consideration within any development to reduce the risk of surface water flooding on and off site. The Lead Local Flood Authority, is the main contact for SUDS issues. However, we have interest in SUDS from a groundwater protection perspective and those area of critical drainage.

The collection and dispersal of clean surface water to ground to recharge aquifer units and prevent localised drainage or surface systems flooding in heavy rainfall is encouraged. However, dispersal into the ground through soakaways or other infiltration systems requires a site-specific investigation and risk assessment. Generally, we would accept roof drainage going to soakaway (or other systems), but other surface drainage may need to go through treatment systems or to foul main, for instance vehicle parking. Infiltrating water has the potential to cause mobilisation of contaminants present in shallow soil/made ground which could ultimately cause pollution of underlying groundwater resources. Where contamination is known or suspected, remedial or other mitigating measures will likely be required so that it can be demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to Controlled Waters.

We advise applicants to follow our guidance – Groundwater Protection. This is a report that highlights the importance of groundwater and encourages industry and other organisations to act responsibly and improve their practices. This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

The design of the drainage systems should be in line with G1, G9, G12 and G13 position statements:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-position-statements>

Infrastructure Delivery

We would recommend that environmental infrastructure, including habitat enhancements, water storage areas, and green space, is taken into account if the Plan looks to fund local infrastructure.

Environmental Permitting Regulations

To see if a proposed development requires an Environmental Permit under the Environment Permitting Regulations please refer to our website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-need-an-environmental-permit>

Under the Environment Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016, a flood risk activity permit (FRAP) may be required for work:

- in, over or under a main river;
- within 8m of the bank of a main river, or 16m if it is a tidal main river;
- within 8m of any flood defence structure or culvert on a main river, or 16m on a tidal main river.

Flood risk activities can be classified as: exclusions, exemptions, standard rules or bespoke. These are associated with the level of risk the proposed works may pose to people, property and the environment. Local Authorities should advise developers to refer to the [flood risk activity permit section](#) of gov.uk for further information.

Please note

This document is a response to a Neighbourhood Plan consultation and does not represent our final view in relation to any future planning application made in relation to any site.

You should seek your own expert advice in relation to technical matters relevant to any planning application before submission.

If you have any questions please contact the Kent and South London Sustainable Places team:

kslplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk

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